

SEEKING THE SHADE
of THE
Arsh

GUIDANCE FOR THE YOUTH

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb
(*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*)

Title: Seeking the Shade of the Arsh | Guidance for the Youth

Compilation of advices from the teachings of
Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

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Website: <http://yunuspatel.co.za>

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

FOREWORD

*All praises are for Allah Ta'ala, the Executioner of all affairs.
Salaat and Salaam upon the best of all Creation,
Sayyidina Muhammad ﷺ, eternally.*

This book is a revised edition of a compilation of advices that was prepared especially for a three day Youth Programme, hosted by Madrasatus Sawlehaat in Rajab 1431 / June 2010. Alhamdulillah, the first edition comprised of fifteen Malfuzaat, taken from the talks and lessons of Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ ¹ and was proof-read and edited by Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ.

This second edition has been prepared with more of Hazrat Maulana's advices and includes standard prescriptions and guidelines towards giving up common weaknesses. Alhamdulillah, Hazrat Maulana رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ had a unique way of presenting different analogies and lessons by which the message and importance of Taqwa and obedience to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah ﷺ were impressed in the heart and mind. These advices offered constant encouragement and motivation. The repetition of some advices is retained due to the diverse angles from which Hazrat Maulana would explain them. Allah Ta'ala mentions in the Qur'aan Shareef that reminding benefits the Believers:

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

“AND REMIND, FOR INDEED, THE REMINDER BENEFITS THE BELIEVERS..”

[SURAH AZ-ZAARIYAT 51:55]

¹ Rahmatullah 'alayh: 'May the mercy of Allah be upon him.' This is mentioned after the name of a religious personality who is deceased.

Hazrat Maulana رحمه الله عليه had a special and compassionate approach to the youth and easily won them over. The youth would love to attend Hazrat Maulana's programmes and looked forward to spending time with Hazrat Maulana. Alhamdulillah, many young people drew great inspiration from Hazrat Maulana's talks and became practical on Deen.

Insha-Allah, these beneficial and valuable advices and prescriptions will be a means of many more young people changing, mending their ways and seeking the enviable honour of the shade of the Arsh of Allah Ta'ala.

May Allah Ta'ala make this book solely for His Pleasure, and accept the very humble effort. May He make it a Sadaqa-e-Jaariyah for Hazrat Maulana, as well as myself and all those who kindly assisted. May Allah Ta'ala grant us all a deep understanding of the knowledge acquired, accompanied with the Taufeeq of practice on the Commandments of Allah Ta'ala and the beautiful teachings of Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم – with sincerity and acceptance. May Allah Ta'ala grant us all, His Love, His Fear and His Recognition. Aameen.

Jumad Al Thania 1437 / March 2016

NB.: Do not touch the Arabic script of the Aayaat (verses) of the Qur'aan Shareef if not in a state of Taharah (cleanliness) –
i.e. Wudhu, or Ghusl (if required).

PART ONE

Guidance for the Youth

Encouraging Advices for Muslim Youth in
these Times of Trials

Rasulullah ﷺ said:

“Take benefit of five before five:

Your youth before your old age,

Your health before your sickness,

Your wealth before your poverty,

Your free-time before your preoccupation,

and

Your life before your death.”²

² Mustadrak, Vol. 4 Pg. 306

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. *You are in Youth*

ON ONE OCCASION, when I was addressing a group of young boys, I explained to them: The word “**you**” is in “**youth**”. And you are presently in youth. Your youth is in your hands. Now it is left to YOU to safeguard ‘you’ in your youth or destroy ‘you’ in your youth.

If you safeguard your youth, Allah Ta’ala will give you respect and dignity. You will enjoy good health – both physical and spiritual. You will enjoy a wholesome, happy life.

There will be success in both worlds.

Allah Ta’ala promises you the noble and enviable position of being in the Shade of His Arsh (Throne) on the Day of Qiyamah³. Seek this special honour and privilege in your youth!

If you say that you are not interested in safeguarding your youth and you want to enjoy this worldly life, by engaging in those actions which please the nafs (ego) and which displease Allah Ta’ala, then ask yourself: What is enjoyment in life? Who is the One who gives enjoyment in life?

True enjoyment and happiness will only come from the One who created the heart and controls the heart – Allah Ta’ala.

³ Qiyamah: Resurrection

Sins bring temporary satisfaction and fleeting enjoyment to the nafs. ...A little while of Haraam pleasure and thereafter one has to suffer with the miserable consequences, life-long.

The youth are the flowers of the Ummah – and it deeply hurts when a flower of the Ummah, coming into full bloom, gets caught up in sins – and thereafter, health, wealth, strength and everything is destroyed!

We deal with so many cases of young Muslim boys diagnosed with AIDS; with young, unmarried school girls and university going girls, who are pregnant or have had abortions, and others who have to also contend with the shameful consequences of sins. ...What did indulgence in Haraam bring? ...Regret, humiliation and disgrace.

My respected Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would say:

*“Agreed, there is a little stolen pleasure in sin
But what great rebellion this is against the Sustainer
(Allah Ta’ala),
(That you use His bounties to disobey Him).
A little while of pleasure and everlasting regret;
What stupidity it is to bury the Janaza of respect and honour.”*

Rasulullah ﷺ said: *“Youth is a kind of madness.”*⁴ It is a stage and period in life when a young person is full of strength and energy, and becomes reckless and uncontrolled in his behaviour and actions; except for the one who adopts Taqwa⁵.

⁴ Al-Maqasidul Hasanah: 586 & 241, Kashful Khafa: 1530 and Faydul Qadir: 4928

⁵ Taqwa: Piety / to abstain or restrain oneself from that which is forbidden.

Often, the young person does not want to listen to his or her parents or to anyone, for that matter. He even says that he is free and can do whatever he wants. He does not want to be bound by restrictions. He believes that he knows everything and is blind to his inexperience and immaturity.

As Muslims, we should know better. The Hadīth of Rasulullah ﷺ informs us: **“The world is a prison for the Believer and a paradise for the disbeliever.”**⁶

True freedom is only obtained when we are released from the prison of this world and we return home to Jannah (Paradise). So long as we are in this world, there will be restrictions; there will be rules and regulations. This is part of our examination. If we pass, we secure freedom forever and ever upon entry into Jannah, where our every desire and wish will be immediately fulfilled.

Allah Ta’ala says in the Qur’aan Shareef:

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ ۝

“THEY WILL HAVE WHATEVER THEY WISH THEREIN, AND WITH US IS MORE.”

[SURAH QAAF 50 : 35]

...No one remains in youth. A few years and it’s all over. So many regret having lost their youth and the wonderful opportunities of obeying Allah Ta’ala, whilst hale and healthy.

No doubt, the environment that we live in is very vicious: So much of Haraam is read, so much of Haraam is heard, and so much of Haraam is seen. There is so much of exposure to Haraam,

⁶ Sahih Muslim 8/210

excessive promotion of sins, all kinds of invitations to sins and great temptations to engage in sins. ...Despite all odds, a Believer can still remain steadfast.

That young person who spends his youth in Allah Ta'ala's obedience, invites the pleasure and mercy of Allah Ta'ala. When Allah Ta'ala gives enjoyment, then that enjoyment is true enjoyment and is related to the heart.

Happiness and enjoyment are not related to money, music, illicit love, drugs, etc. **True pleasure is not outside the heart. The true enjoyment is that which Allah Ta'ala gives in the heart of a Mu'min (Believer) – but on condition that the Mu'min is obedient to Him and His Rasul ﷺ .**

Together with the effort to stay away from sins and spend the time of youth productively and constructively – in good deeds – we should keep good, righteous company, and continuously make Dua to Allah Ta'ala for His special protection and for steadfastness. ...In the words of my respected Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ:

‘(O Allah) wherever I am – whether on earth or in the skies – my Taqwa must always remain safe.’

May Allah Ta'ala grant us all the correct understanding such that we strive in the obedience of Allah Ta'ala, happily; and that we spend our youth seeking His Pleasure and earning the great honour of the Shade of His Arsh.

2. Tug-of-War

ONCE, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to join in an outing with some students of a Hifz class. They were having a picnic at a park. ...We all require rest, exercise and some entertainment – but of the Halaal kind.

One of the games that those youngsters played was tug-of-war. After their game, I mentioned to them that in tug-of-war, there are two parties pulling a rope. Winning is based on the side that pulls stronger. I mentioned that we should take a lesson from this:

In life, there is always a ‘tug-of-war’. **There is the pull of temptation and sins and there is the pull of Deen and Shari’ah; there is the pull of the nafs and shaytaan, and there is the pull of the Rooh (soul).**

From our side, we have to suppress and overcome the pull of shaytaan towards Haraam. We have to resist the pull of the nafs when it demands and commands to anything Haraam. When the nafs makes a demand, we will look at the Command of Allah Ta’ala. ...The Muslim does not give into the evil demands of his nafs. He looks at the Command of His Rabb, Allah Ta’ala, and he willingly and happily accepts, submits and acts in accordance with what pleases his Beloved Allah Ta’ala. He sacrifices the evil desires of his nafs for the pleasure of Allah Ta’ala.

To be able to come out as the victorious party – as the champions in this ‘tug-of-war’ – we will have to strengthen our Imaan,

Istiyaamah⁷ and Yaqeen⁸ in Allah Ta'ala. In this way, we will be the dominant and strong side.

If we do not give any attention to building our spiritual stamina, strength and prowess, then we will easily be defeated by the other side. Nafs and shaytaan will not have to pull very hard because spiritually, we will be weak.

To maintain the upper-hand at all times, we draw our strength – and great, great spiritual strength will be drawn – establishing Salaah, five times a day. For us men, this must be performed in the Masjid, in Jamaat (congregation). Together with this, we need to maintain our identity as Muslims and work towards fulfilling the Commands of Allah Ta'ala – especially, staying away from all those actions that are displeasing to Him.

We should also be selective of the company we keep and seek out friends who are concerned about their Deen and are also trying to be obedient to Allah Ta'ala. If not, then a bad 'friend' is no friend. He belongs to the opposite party, with nafs and shaytaan – and will pull strongly to draw us into sin. Then we will be defeated.

If the friend is a good friend, he will assist us and will be on our side, in overcoming the opposition.

In the game of tug-of-war, there are occasions and times when there is a balance or the other side is stronger. The weak side will get the upper-hand when there is a slight lapse. In our day to day lives, this is what we term as 'accidental' sins: There is a lapse. We

⁷ Istiyaamah: steadfastness

⁸ Yaqeen: Conviction

lose our grip, and shaytaan and nafs gain the upper-hand. To regain control, there is a need for plenty of remorse and sincere Taubah (repentance). In this way, we redeem our position of being the strong side.

Of course, we should allow the nafs some Halaal pleasure and entertainment. Having a picnic and playing for a little while is important to keep us refreshed, re-energised and happy. However, we should always be on guard that nafs and shaytaan do not get any leeway and pull us away from Allah Ta'ala and Deen.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq of becoming tough and strong against our enemies, nafs and shaytaan.

*'Life cannot become boring when we establish
contact with the One who gives Happiness – Allah Ta'ala.'*

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

3. *Who is a Friend?*

A FRIEND IS ONE who is concerned about his friend's goodness, welfare and health. A friend wishes to see his friend progress in life, be happy, and enjoy respect and success in both worlds.

A true and sincere friend is a helper, supporter and protector of one's spiritual well-being. He encourages towards what is good and discourages that which is evil and destructive.

An enemy, on the other hand, desires the destruction of a person's life, health, wealth and respect. So can the '*friend*' who encourages you or offers you drugs or alcohol, or takes you to concerts, cinemas, rave clubs, gambling dens, prostitute quarters or introduces you to music, pornography, etc. be called a friend?

Nay, he is your enemy!

If you befriend such a person, you will then have shaytaan, nafs, as well as this '*friend*' / '*friends*' as your enemies!

Allah Ta'ala mentions the reality and outcome of such '*friendship*' in the Qur'aan Shareef:

الْأَحْيَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

“FRIENDS, ON THAT DAY, WILL BECOME ENEMIES TO ONE ANOTHER, EXCEPT THE GOD-FEARING.”

[SURAH AZ-ZUKHRUF 43 : 67]

On the Day of Qiyamah, many a person will be extremely remorseful for having befriended a person who encouraged him to evil and sin.

Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ related in his Tafseer, *Ma'ariful Qur'aan*, an incident that was narrated by Hazrat Ali رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ regarding two Muslim friends and two non-Muslim friends – which should make us reflect over the friends we are and the friends we have.

One of the Muslim friends died. When he was given the glad-tidings of Jannah, he remembered his friend and supplicated in his favour: *“O Allah! That friend of mine would advise me to obey You and Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ . He would direct me towards virtuous deeds and prevent me from evil deeds. He kept reminding me that one day I would have to meet You. O Allah! Do not misguide him after me, so that he may also see the scenes of Jannah as You have shown to me. Be pleased with him, as You are with me.”*

In reply, it will be said to him: *“Do not worry. If you know what rewards I have stored for your friend, you will weep less and laugh more.”*

Later, when the friend will also have died, both the souls will meet and Allah Ta'ala will direct them to praise each other. Thereupon, they will say about the other: *“He is the best brother, best companion and best friend.”*

As against this, when one of the non-Muslim friends will die and he will be told that he will go to Jahannum, he will recollect his

friend and will supplicate thus: *“O Allah! That friend of mine would insist upon me to disobey You and Your Messenger ﷺ . He would direct me towards vices and prevent me from good deeds and would say that I would never meet You. O Allah! Do not give him guidance after me, so that he may also see the scenes of Hell, as You have shown to me, and be displeased with him, just as You are displeased with me.”*

Later, when the other friend will also have died, their souls will be brought together and they will be directed to condemn each other. Each will say about the other: *“He is the worst brother, worst companion and worst friend.”*⁹

Rasulullah ﷺ cautioned us regarding our choice of friends: **“A person is on the Deen (way of life) of his friend, so every one of you should look at who he befriends.”**¹⁰

The most common cause of sins amongst the youth is peer pressure. Almost every person divulges being introduced to sins through ‘friends’.

When pressured to engage in sins, be firm on Deen and be courageous. Say: ***I do not want to displease my Kind and Loving Allah Ta’ala. I do not want to walk the path to Jahannum. I do not want invite the fire of Jahannum into my life.***

May Allah Ta’ala make us good, righteous friends and grant us such friends who will benefit and assist us in our Deen.

⁹ Ibn Katheer

¹⁰ Abu Dawood / Tirmidhi

4. *Great Rewards*

YOUTH IS A TIME WHERE EMOTIONS and desires are strong and overwhelming. This, coupled with the great temptations all around, no doubt make the test to resist and restrain oneself very challenging. Many mention that in their efforts to be obedient to Allah Ta'ala and follow the Sunnah, they have to also endure the mockery and criticism of others.

When a young person sacrifices his or her life for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, and withstands the mockery and criticism of others, then Allah Ta'ala who is “الْبَصِيرُ” (All-Seeing), “السَّمِيعُ” (All-Hearing) and “الْعَلِيمُ” (All-Knowing) and who is fully aware of the criticism and the laughter of people, grants this young person such happiness which the others will not even imagine.

Those who laugh and mock and choose to live a life in the disobedience of Allah Ta'ala are denied the sweetness and pleasure that Allah Ta'ala gives in life, unless they make sincere Taubah and also turn to Allah Ta'ala.

...One of our first year students wrote a letter, stating that her hobby and passion was photography. She loved to take photographs and had a collection of hundreds, if not thousands, of photographs.

She wrote that in one of the recent Tarbiyah¹¹ lessons, my discussion diverted to photography, the prohibition of taking photographs of animate objects, the repercussions and grave punishments. Alhamdulillah, that Nasihah (advice) affected her heart and troubled her conscience greatly.

Since photography was something beloved to her, she was torn between the Command of Allah Ta'ala and her passion for taking photographs. She desired and wanted to continue, but now knew and understood that it is Haraam.

Alhamdulillah, for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, she decided to sacrifice what she loved so much. She wrote that she took all her photographs outside, brought them together in a heap, took courage, lit a match and threw it in. The student said that as she watched her beloved photographs burn, tears streamed down her face ... **not in regret, but in happiness, that she chose to please Allah Ta'ala over her nafs.**

Alhamdulillah! What wonderful progress in just a few months being at Madrasah. ...That was certainly a huge sacrifice for a young girl, and it definitely would not go unrewarded. As I explained to her also, that her happiness was only the first of many, many great rewards from Allah Ta'ala's side!

Alhamdulillah, others have written that they destroyed their collections of music cds and other Haraam items, or they deleted any Haraam content that was on their phones, computers, laptops, etc. and there was just happiness that followed knowing that they were pleasing Allah Ta'ala. Many have been given glad tidings – via

¹¹ Tarbiyah: Spiritual nurturing

dreams – where they see themselves in the gardens of Jannah, meeting with Nabi ﷺ , Nabi ﷺ being pleased with them, etc.

The fact that so many young girls and boys have given up their sins is proof that you can live a clean and good life, and happily spend your life in the obedience of Allah Ta’ala and His Rasul ﷺThey too have the same desires and inclinations and face the same temptations and invitations towards sins, but they have taken courage. They are staying away from sins and they are striving to please Allah Ta’ala. They say that they are now genuinely happy. They experience peace and tranquillity.

This is Allah Ta’ala’s Promise:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

“WHOEVER DOES RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE, WHILE HE IS A BELIEVER – WE WILL SURELY CAUSE HIM TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE, AND WE WILL SURELY GIVE THEM THEIR REWARD (IN THE HEREAFTER) ACCORDING TO THE BEST OF WHAT THEY USED TO DO.”

[SURAH AN-NAHL 16 : 97]

Allah Ta’ala guarantees an extremely enjoyable life in His obedience. There will be sweetness in life. Added to this, on the Day of Qiyamah, Allah Ta’ala will grant the special honour of the shade of His Arsh (Throne). ...This is certainly something to seek in this worldly life – and a person who has this wonderful opportunity should not let it be lost to him or her.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: “Seven persons will be sheltered in the shade [of the Arsh] of Allah on the Day of Judgment when there will be no other shade, besides His shade. They are:

1. A just ruler;
2. **A young person who passed his/her youth in the worship and service of Allah – The Lord of Honour and Glory;**
3. One whose heart is perpetually attached to the Masjid (mosque);
4. Two persons who love each other for the sake of Allah - they meet for His sake and part for His sake;
5. A man who is invited for sin by a beautiful woman of high lineage but he declines, saying: *‘I fear Allah!’*;
6. One who spends in charity in a secret way without making a show, so that his left hand may not know what his right hand spent; and
7. One who remembers Allah in solitude and his tears overflow.”¹²

Those who restrain themselves from evil desires are promised the home of every enjoyment – Jannah:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ
فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۖ

**“BUT AS FOR HIM WHO FEARED STANDING BEFORE HIS LORD, AND
RESTRAINED HIMSELF FROM IMPURE, EVIL DESIRES AND LUSTS.
VERILY, PARADISE WILL BE HIS ABODE.”**

[SURAH AN-NAZI’AAT 79 : 40/41]

¹² Sahih Bukhari / Sahih Muslim

The resistance power to stay away from sins is easily built up in the company of the pious, in the company of the friends of Allah Ta'ala. Their company should be sought and their advices should be heeded.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to give up all sins and follow the beautiful path of obedience to Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul ﷺ .

'The sooner you connect yourself to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah ﷺ , the sooner you get on track, the first thing Allah Ta'ala blesses you with is peace of mind, contentment and happiness.'

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

5. Artificial Enjoyment

HOLIDAYS ARE DIFFICULT FOR STUDENTS. Most of them do not know what to do to pass their time. The boredom they experience leads them to all kinds of sins: music, television, cinema, theatres, clubs, etc. Very sadly, even casinos and escort agencies are now being frequented by our youth.

When the ‘thrill’ and ‘enjoyment’ of these sins wear off and the boredom and monotony of the ‘same old thing’ sets in, their boredom leads them to drugs – to induce a high, so that they may experience some artificial enjoyment, or they keep taking drugs or they drink alcohol to escape the problems that their sins have landed them in.

When the effect of that wears off or when they become immune, they have to increase the strength of the drug to get on that ‘high’ again. They become hooked onto the habit, become complete wrecks and destroy their lives. They come crashing, right down.

Once, a disheveled young girl dashed into the Madrasah office. She said: *“Maulana, I have a question for you.”*

I asked: *“What is the question?”*

She replied: *“Is it Haraam to take drugs?”*

I said: *“No.”* This reply must have surprised her. ...She probably thought that at least she had found a Maulana who has declared drug-taking as Halaal (lawful).

She fired another question: *“Is it perfectly acceptable to take drugs?”*

I replied: “Yes.” ...This must have shocked her even more.

I thereafter explained to her that there are many different types of drugs prescribed by doctors, for various ailments and diseases. Within the prescribed limits, these are permissible. But to take drugs so that you may ‘visit’ the planets and the ‘people of outer space’ or that you may ‘fly without wings’ is **definitely not permissible**. Such drugs ruin a person’s respect and dignity.

I was later informed that she was from the university and had a drug habit. ...Why was she taking drugs? ...Perhaps she was experimenting, or trying to impress, or she was depressed, or rebelling, or just bored.

Those who believe in Allah Ta’ala and have an intense love for Allah Ta’ala, never suffer boredom. How can you ever become bored in your search for the Beloved?

When a person engages in the Zikr of Allah Ta’ala, stays away from everything prohibited, develops a close bond with Allah Ta’ala, drowns in the Ishq (intense love) of Allah Ta’ala and Rasulullah ﷺ, he is always on a ‘high’ – a spiritual high – without any drugs.

He enjoys such coolness, satisfaction and peace, that if drug addicts only knew of it or experienced it, they would go nowhere near drugs.

Islam is so beautiful and practical as a way of life, that included in its teachings are enjoyment, entertainment and pleasures of the Halaal kind, in order for us to stay refreshed. It is only left for us to appreciate. ...May Allah Ta'ala grant us this appreciation.

'Haraam brings HARM, and if we take the double 'a' in the transliteration of the word 'Haraam', it brings double harm: Harm in this world and harm in the Aakhirah (Hereafter)!

Whilst in the wake of Haraam, there is great harm; in that same Haraam is the companionship of the devil. The word 'devil' contains the word 'evil' and conveys a warning to us: The person, who has the devil as his companion, has an evil companion. And evil will be the consequences for he who has the devil as a companion. ...So take heed!

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

6. *The Thorn Tree*

HAZRAT MAULANA JALALUDDEEN RUMI رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ related a story in his Mathnawi Shareef, which contains great lesson for all of us.

The story goes that a person planted a thorn tree on a pathway, frequently used by people. As it grew, its thorns would injure those walking by. The person was told that the thorn tree was a hindrance and an obstacle, causing harm and injury to the people. So he promised to uproot the tree, saying: *'I will do so tomorrow.'*

Despite the complaints of the people, many 'tomorrows' came and many 'tomorrows' went by, but no effort was made in uprooting the thorn tree. After many years, the tree had grown strong and resilient and its roots had spread deep in the earth. The matter was finally taken to the municipality and the person was ordered to remove the tree.

Having no option, he set off to fulfil the task. However, with the passing of time, he had aged and weakness had set in. On the other hand, the tree had become so strong and so firmly rooted that there was no possibility of him uprooting such a big tree. Due to his weakness, he could not do anything.

The only way the thorn tree could be uprooted and removed was with a bulldozer. The bulldozer was his only means of ridding the path of the harmful thorn tree.

This is just a story to give lesson.

We see that when a tree is planted, it is generally planted in its early stage, as a seedling or as a sapling – when it is small and easy to handle. It can also be uprooted very easily at this stage. However, as it takes root and grows, it gains in strength ... until we find the tree bigger and taller than man.

When a person is young and is engaged in any sins, then these sins are also “young”. Whilst a person is young, it is easy to uproot sins from his or her life. If no effort is made, then these sins become stronger; the roots of these sins extend deeper and deeper in the heart. They spread and entrench themselves in the heart. As a result, it becomes extremely difficult for a person to uproot the ‘thorn tree’ of his sins. A greater Mujahada (striving) would be required. The person will have to make a greater effort to restrain himself from Haraam.

Whereas thorns injure the physical body, the thorns of sins greatly harm and damage one’s Imaan and Deen.

Just as the thorn tree in the story required a bulldozer to be uprooted, so too, this tree of sins – if it has become big and deep-rooted – will be uprooted and removed with the aid of a different kind of bulldozer.

These ‘bulldozers’ are the Ahlullah¹³. Allah Ta’ala has given them such hearts, which contain such Noor of Taqwa, that in their company, people who have indulged in sins all their lives, will be able to, with ease, rid themselves of even major sins, Insha-Allah. In the company of those who are true Ahlullah, sins of a lifetime

¹³ Ahlullah: People of Allah (Ta’ala)

will be uprooted and spiritual illnesses will be remedied, Insha-Allah.

A person should take courage and seek the assistance of the Ahlullah, and see the transformation that takes place with the Fadhl (Grace) of Allah Ta'ala.

There are, however, conditions to be met:

- We should have love and respect for the Ahlullah, and we should keep their company, without prejudice.
- We should sit with the Niyah (intention) of Islaah (reformation), with an open heart and mind.

If we attend such Majaalis (gatherings) with these accompanying conditions, we will leave with Noor in our hearts. It is via this Noor that a person makes sincere Taubah, and it is this Noor which is instrumental in creating the keen desire to reform oneself and improve in one's Deen.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq of completely uprooting all our sins and living our lives, fully in His obedience.

'There is no place of safety except in the obedience of Allah Ta'ala.'

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

7. *Fashion*

FASHION IS A TEST OF THE VERY SEVERE KIND. In fact, it is a madness and an obsession that has afflicted many. It makes a person blind, except to the chase of keeping up with the latest fashion trends, styles and designs, which are ever changing.

Have we ever stopped to think that one day, very soon, we will leave this world wrapped in a simple Kafan (shroud), the pattern and style of which has remained the same and will always remain as is?

How senseless it is to make fashion the '*be all and the end all*' of our lives, when the inescapable occasion of death calls for just one Kafan, **with no designer names or brand labels.**

Ponder a while: If the obsession is with jewellery, then no ring, no bangle, no jewel will adorn the person when buried beneath the earth. If the infatuation is with handbags, the Kafan does not even have one pocket. Since nothing is taken from this world, there won't be a need for a handbag. If the fixation is with shoes, we will be barefoot when placed in our graves.

If our preoccupation is with cell-phones, tablets, in upgrading and having the best of technology, and if we are consumed with social media and are negligent of our purpose in this world and neglectful of good deeds, we should understand that there will be no WiFi, no 3G and no connection for socialising with our friends when in the grave. There will be just the person and his deeds!

Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ makes plain this reality:

*“The world is ‘darul ghuroor’ - a world of deception
The day man is delivered to his grave,
Nothing except his shroud accompanies him.”*

To wear good clothes, eat fine food and live well is not Haraam (forbidden), if the earnings are Halaal (lawful) and our obligations to the poor and needy are also met.

Whilst it is permissible to dress well and live well, it is not acceptable to be lavish, exceeding all bounds of Islamic guidelines, ignoring the plight and the dire circumstances of the poor and needy. Many are without employment, food and even homes – more especially in these times wherein inflation has gone through the roof, and a loaf of bread and a litre of milk are beyond the means of the poor. We should be considerate and remember that we will be questioned about our expenditure on the Day of Qiyamah.

Nabi صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: ‘[On the Day of Judgment], the feet of a person will not move until he is asked regarding:

- 1.) His life; how did he spend it,
- 2.) His knowledge; how did he act upon it,
- 3.) His wealth; how did he acquire it (and)
- 4.) How did he spend it, and
- 5.) His body, how did he use it.’¹⁴

¹⁴ Tirmidhi

...What has to be understood is that we must not become slaves of passion and fashion.

Our clothing and accessories should also not become the medium of us falling prey to the deadly diseases of Takabbur (pride), Ujub (vanity/conceit) and Riyaa (show and ostentation). Nabi ﷺ warned: **“Whoever wears garments for fame, Allah will clothe him with the garment of disgrace.”**¹⁵

It is this diversion and game of “fashion” and “materialism” which literally gulps and swallows money and opens the doors of wastage, extravagance, living beyond one’s means, purchasing on interest; and being negligent of the objective of this worldly life. ...It also leads to rivalry, jealousy, enmity and other sins.

There is great ease and comfort in simple living without being shackled by the need to change with changing designs and fashion. **Simplicity is a part of Imaan**¹⁶ and

وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ لَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ ط

‘THE DRESS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS – THAT IS THE BEST.’

[SURAH AL-A’RAAF 7 : 26]

There are those who use the Ahadīth on neatness, Ṭaharah¹⁷ and so forth, as justification for modern day lavishness; whereas fashion, lavishness and extravagance are very different from neatness and good grooming.

¹⁵ Abu Dawood

¹⁶ Abu Dawood

¹⁷ Ṭaharah: purity / cleanliness

Allah Ta'ala describes those who are extravagant and lavish as brothers of shaytaan:

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ ط وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ۝

“SURELY, SQUANDERERS ARE BROTHERS OF SHAYATEEN, AND THE SHAYTAAN IS VERY UNGRATEFUL TO HIS LORD.”

[SURAH AL-ISRA 17 : 27]

Hazrat Khwaja Azizul Hasan Majzoob رحمۃ اللہ علیہ very aptly stated:

*“You are always concerned: ‘I must remain above all.
My fashion and beautification must excel all.’
Is this how one, who is going to die, lives?
The outward beauty of the world has deceived you!”*

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the understanding of the purpose of this worldly life and grant us the Taufeeq of striving for what is real and everlasting.

‘Love is a very great bounty, but we have misdirected this love to the material world and its commodities. The love of Dunya darkens the heart and ruins the heart.

*Redirect the bounty of Love to the True Beloved. **Love Allah Ta'ala.**
His Love must reign supreme in our hearts! ...The Love of Allah Ta'ala beautifies, brightens and enlivens the heart and the life of a person.’*

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

8. Avoid the Temptation

I RECALL FROM MY CHILDHOOD DAYS, someone saying: “**...For temptation will lead you into trouble and make you cry.**” – And indeed, this is exactly what happens when one gives into the temptation to engage in any Haraam.

Ask those who gave into the demands of nafs and shaytaan about the repercussions of their sins. They will say: Trouble, trouble and more trouble. Tears, tears and more tears.

No doubt, there is a lot of temptation to see Haraam, listen to Haraam, speak Haraam, touch Haraam, walk towards Haraam and think of Haraam. However, we should always remind ourselves that there are grave and severe consequences of indulgence in Haraam.

When a person falls for temptation, he falls into disgrace, humiliation and embarrassment. So many who were blinded by the enticement and lure of nafs and shaytaan destroyed themselves. In falling for temptation, they got caught up in drugs, alcohol, fornication, cheating, fraud, bribery, gambling and other Haraam. Some landed up in prisons, some with AIDS or some other sickness, some committed suicide, but generally, almost all lost their respect amongst the people. ...So take a lesson.

Temptations will always be there. If there was no temptation, then there would have been no such thing as Taqwa. The demand is to resist, to stay away and to abstain from sins. Not to commit sins is so much easier than committing sins.

Yes, there will be some temporary pain which comes over the heart when a person resists the temptation to sin. When he restrains his gaze, his heart and his thoughts, and refrains from temptation, it may seem that his heart is going to shatter. This temporary pain is negligible and just a passing ache in comparison to the consequences of sins – which invites prolonged sorrow and misery.

One person mentioned to Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ that whenever he was tempted to look at a strange woman, and he lowered his gaze, in obedience to Allah Ta'ala's Command, he would experience a pain on his heart for that moment and then happiness and Noor would fill the heart. On the other hand, if he did not lower his gaze and went on to cast an evil gaze at a strange woman, then for a number of days he would experience darkness and restlessness in his heart. He thus realised that the temporary enjoyment was not worth the darkness, uneasiness, and restlessness that follows.

This pain which comes upon the heart, when abstaining from sins, is so beloved to Allah Ta'ala that He bestows the priceless bounty of the sweetness of Imaan in the heart. ...This sweetness is in the form of enjoyment in one's Ibaadah, service to creation and in everything good.

So hidden in the pain of giving up sins is enjoyment – enjoyment, which cannot be truly captured in words. Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ had said that the languages of the world fail to describe the condition of that heart which is blessed with the sweetness and the fragrance of the love of Allah Ta'ala.

On the other hand, hidden in the Haraam enjoyment of sin is grief and gloom, which afflicts the heart. Life becomes very straitened and miserable. Allah Ta'ala says:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا

“WHOSOEVER TURNS AWAY FROM MY REMEMBRANCE

(I.E. NEITHER BELIEVES IN THIS QUR`AAN SHAREEF, NOR ACTS ON ITS LAWS AND INJUNCTIONS), VERILY, FOR HIM IS A LIFE OF HARDSHIP...”

[SURAH TA-HA 20 : 124]

For life to become comfortable and happy, we will have to avoid the temptations towards sins, give up our sins with sincere repentance and move in the direction of obedience to Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul ﷺ. Avoiding the temptation to sin earns one the crown of Allah Ta'ala's Friendship:

إِنْ أَوْلِيَاؤُهُ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ

“... VERILY NONE ARE THE AULIYA (FRIENDS OF ALLAH TA'ALA) EXCEPT THOSE WHO REFRAIN FROM HIS DISOBEDIENCE...”

[SURAH AL-ANFAAL 8 : 34]

How fortunate is that person who earns this crown in his or her youth! What an honour this is for him and what success awaits him in both worlds!

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the correct understanding and the Taufeeq of Amal.

9. *Distinctions in Deen*

THERE ARE THOSE STUDENTS who have great ambition and high aspirations for worldly success. We find that they will exert themselves in their efforts to secure excellent results in their examinations.

To obtain as many A's or distinctions, diligence and hard work become the order of the day. They 'burn the midnight oil' – for what? ...For success in this worldly life.

If this is the one-tracked, single-minded effort for worldly success, what about the effort to secure the success of the Hereafter? ...What of the many A's that a Muslim should make every effort to obtain, for success in the Hereafter: The A for Akhlaaq¹⁸, the A for Aashiq¹⁹ of Allah Ta'ala, the A for 'A'maal', the A for 'Aabid²⁰', the A for 'Aarif²¹'? ...These A's need to feature in our lives for true success.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to inculcate within ourselves, the noble characteristics of Rasulullah ﷺ as well as follow his way of life, which Allah Ta'ala has awarded the highest distinction to:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝

“AND YOU ARE SURELY ON AN EXCELLENT STANDARD OF CHARACTER.”

[SURAH AL-QALAM 68 :4]

¹⁸ Akhlaaq: character

¹⁹ Aashiq: Lover of Allah Ta'ala

²⁰ Aabid: worshipper

²¹ 'Aarif: One who has recognition of Allah Ta'ala

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ
وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ۝

**“CERTAINLY YOU HAVE IN THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH AN EXCELLENT
EXAMPLE FOR HIM WHO HOPES IN ALLAH AND THE LATTER DAY AND
REMEMBERS ALLAH MUCH.”**

[SURAH AL-AHZAAB 33 : 21]

Any person who follows this beautiful way of life and obeys Allah Ta’ala and His Rasul ﷺ will achieve outstanding awards, rewards and great success.

وَمَن يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ۝

**“... WHOEVER OBEYS ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER ACHIEVES A GREAT
SUCCESS.”**

[SURAH AL-AHZAAB 33 : 71]

May Allah Ta’ala grant us appreciation for what we have been given of this beautiful Deen and the Taufeeq of acquiring distinctions in Deen and the great success of Akhirah.

*‘Intelligence can be very misleading if not guided by the Qur’aan
and Hadith.’*

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

10. Illicit Love

ONE OF THE SIGNS OF QIYAMAH is that fornication will become rampant. Indeed, everything today promotes and encourages fornication; everything encourages a promiscuous and shameless life. The cinema and media remove, from the heart, the hatred for the sin of Zina (adultery / fornication) and other Haraam. As such, we find that illicit love relationships have become a scourge in the Muslim community as well. The hearts and lives of young and old are in flames – due to illicit relationships.

I receive letters and e-mails from boys and girls – even as young as eleven and twelve years of age – who mention that their hearts are broken and that they are depressed and suicidal because of some Haraam relationship that came to an end. Often, in trying to remedy the problem, they get involved in another illicit relationship and get caught up in a vicious, ugly cycle of more sins and more misery!

Unfortunately, with exposure to Hollywood and Bollywood films, illicit relationships are glorified and extolled and made to appear as some virtue and some prerequisite for happiness. But it is not exciting and not wonderful – as it is hyped up to be. On the outside is just a superficial and false happiness. Its reality is darkness, misery, depression, suicide, sorrow and regret. Its end is bitter and nasty.

Despite the many problems that accrue with illicit relationships, which many will testify to, millions – in the quest for true love – are drowning in the ocean of insincere, false love.

I am replying to so many letters ... not a single person has found peace in sins and illicit relationships, and it can never be. Sins are an immediate connection with the fire of hell. Moreover, our hearts are in the full control of Allah Ta'ala. He can turn the heart in whichever way He wants.

Restlessness is the order of the day. Our Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had mentioned in poetry:

*“O Meer, what did we find in this perishable world?
...Restlessness ...restlessness ...restlessness.*

*O Meer, must I inform you of what I found in this world?
Someone is madly in love with this one or that one...
After playing their roles as Layla and Majnoon,
they leave this world.*

*The only fortunate ones are the Ahle Dil²² –
through whom I, Akhtar, have found the road to my Maula
(my Master, Allah Ta'ala).”*

More often, this false love is based on physical beauty. So if someone more beautiful or more handsome comes along, attention is directed to her or him and the first ‘love’ is forgotten. But that was never love. It was lust which is selfish and insincere.

My Shaykh رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would say that this ‘Ishq’ (Love) is ‘Fisq’ (Sin). **Illicit love is another deception of shaytaan so that we move away from and lose sight of the real and true love – which is the love of Allah Ta’ala.**

²² Ahle-Dil: People of heart (that is, those who have a special connection with Allah Ta'ala)

Effort needs to be made in developing the love of Allah Ta'ala which erases all the false idols from the heart and which washes the heart clean of the dirt and filth of illicit love.

Our respected Mashaa'ikh have presented to us such guidelines²³ whereby it becomes easy for us to change the focus of our heart – from ghairullah (other than Allah Ta'ala) to the True Beloved, Allah Ta'ala.

Three qualities create love in the heart: Jamaal (Beauty), Kamaal (Perfection) and Ihsaan (Favour). We find that these attributes are perfect in Allah Ta'ala.

Looking at the creation of Allah Ta'ala: the skies, the oceans, the flora and fauna, we see such beauty and splendour. If Allah Ta'ala has granted a mere atom of beauty to His creation, what can be said of His beauty? **...Have we ever considered the beauty of He who creates and bestows beauty?**

Look at the creation of the universe: the perfect harmony of the day and night; of spring, summer, autumn and winter. Reflect over our creation: the different stages we have to pass through... infancy, childhood, adulthood and old age. Consider the various organs of the body; their position, purpose and function. ...In this, we recognise the Greatness and Power of Allah Ta'ala; the perfection of His Creation and of its structure, system and coordination.

Then again, we cannot help but love that person who is generous, kind and who always showers us with his favours and gifts.

²³ Also refer to page 114: Giving Up Illicit Relationships

Consider the kindness and favour of Allah Ta’ala in creating us as Ashraful Makhluqaat (The best of Creation), without us having even asked for such honour. We could have been created as animals, insects or some other creation, but Allah Ta’ala honoured us by creating us as human beings. Allah Ta’ala says in Surah At-Teen:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ۝

“VERILY, WE CREATED MAN OF THE BEST STATURE.”

[SURAH AT-TEEN 95 : 4]

Added to this, without us even deserving it, Allah Ta’ala has blessed us with Imaan and Islam, as well as so many other gifts such as sight, hearing, speech, intelligence, health, wealth, beauty and so forth. We enjoy innumerable spiritual, physical and material bounties in our lives.

وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا ط

“... AND IF YOU COUNT THE BLESSINGS OF ALLAH, YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO ENUMERATE THEM...”

[SURAH IBRAHEEM 14 : 34]

In each blessing, there are so many more!

...Pondering over the countless bounties of Allah Ta'ala will increase Muhabbat for Allah Ta’ala. If we would just make a little effort to recognize Allah Ta’ala – His infinite Kindness, Compassion, Love and Generosity – we will fall intensely and unconditionally in love with Him. We will recognize and understand that Allah Ta’ala is the True Beloved. His Love is never-ending.

*“Allah is Everlasting and free from passing away.
His Love is also fresher than a newly formed rosebud.
O Seeker, choose the Love of the Living One,
Who remains forever.”*

When there is love, then the concern is that Allah Ta’ala and Rasulallah ﷺ must be pleased and that there should be no action that incurs their displeasure.

The Love of Allah Ta’ala is easily acquired by keeping the company of the sincere lovers of Allah Ta’ala and drawing that love from their hearts. The Ush-Shaaq (Lovers) of Allah Ta’ala are our link to falling in love with Allah Ta’ala. Rasulallah ﷺ also taught us a beautiful Dua asking Allah Ta’ala for His love, the love of those who love Him and the deeds which will earn His Love:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ، وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ، وَالْعَمَلَ الَّذِي يُبَلِّغُنِي حُبَّكَ

*“O Allah, I ask for Your Love, and the love of that person who loves You
and of those actions which attract Your Love.”*

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the company of His Friends and bless us with the great treasure and wealth of His Ma’rifat (recognition) and Love.

*‘Don’t court before marriage. Most couples court, court and court, and
after marriage, they end up in divorce courts!’*

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

11. The Tranquility of the Heart

LIKE THE NEEDLE OF THE COMPASS FACES NORTH when at rest, so the heart of the Mu'min faces in the direction of Allah Ta'ala's obedience and pleasure. In the obedience of Allah Ta'ala do we find our peace, contentment and happiness.

When a compass is moved or shaken, we observe how the needle is disturbed and begins to move restlessly this way and that way – as if agitated. When it is placed down, it continues to move about until finally it finds its rest in the direction of North. ...We should take lesson from this.

When the heart of a Mu'min is shaken with sins, with disobedience to Allah Ta'ala, then the heart's Sukoon (tranquility) is disturbed. The heart is in a state of restlessness and anxiety until the person sincerely repents. On sincere Taubah, the heart settles back in the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and once again enjoys its Sukoon.

...My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would say that Sukoon is an exclusive bounty and gift for the Mu'min. It only descends on the heart of a Believer, with the condition that there is obedience to Allah Ta'ala and there is abstinence from sins.

Not only do sins disturb and disrupt the tranquility of the heart; sins blemish the heart with ugly black marks. Rasulullah ﷺ explained: **“When a Mu'min (believer) sins, a black dot appears**

on his heart. If he repents and seeks Allah's forgiveness, his heart becomes cleansed and polished. If he continues to commit more and more sins (without repenting), the spot continues to spread and ultimately covers all of his heart."²⁴

I have given the following example many a time: The person who is wearing a white Kurta and he is always conscious of his cleanliness, will be very uneasy and uncomfortable if a drop of black ink falls onto his Kurta or if food stains his Kurta. He will make haste to wash it off immediately – because the stain of ink spoils the whiteness of his Kurta.

This is the condition of the Believer who is obedient to Allah Ta'ala. His heart is like a white garment or a white sheet. The moment he falls into any sin, mistakenly, he senses the dark, black spot of the sin on his white heart. **He is very uneasy, uncomfortable and unhappy, and immediately seeks to clean his heart with sincere Taubah.**

On the other hand, we find that those who work in garages generally wear dark overalls. This is because they handle oil and grease and their work requires clothing which is practical. If more oil and more grease soils and stains the overall, it is not a cause for concern because the garment is dark in colour and the stains are not conspicuous.

Similar is the condition of the person whose heart is already soiled and dirtied with sins for which no Taubah has been made. More

²⁴ Tirmidhi

sins do not affect him or bother him because the heart is already dark and black.

This does not mean that a person sits content with such a heart. It is absolutely necessary that he quickly begins a full scrub and wash of his heart with Taubah and Istighfaar.

Sincere Taubah, Zikrullah and the effort in the direction of obedience to Allah Ta'ala will most certainly remove all the blackness and dirt of sins from that heart. The heart will then regain its original state of whiteness and cleanliness.

Nabi ﷺ taught us a Dua that facilitates this washing and purification of the heart:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْسِلْ خَطَايَايَ بِمَاءِ التَّلَجِّ وَالْبَرْدِ وَنَقِّ قَلْبِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا
نَقَّيْتَ الثَّوْبَ الْاَبْيَضَ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ

“O Allah, wash off my sins with the (melted) water of ice and snow, and purify my heart of sins, even as white clothes are cleansed of filth.”²⁵

Hazrat Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had explained that the quality of ice is its **coolness** and the outward characteristic of snow is its **whiteness**. **Thus, the whiteness removes the darkness of sins and the coolness eliminates the heat of sins. ...** ²⁶سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

²⁵ Sunan Nasai, Al Mujtaba Hadith: 333

²⁶ Glory be to Allah

Nabi ﷺ used the word 'white' cloth because black cloth does not make apparent the stains or marks of dirt. White clothes reveal the slightest trace of dirt.

Together with sincere Taubah, it is essential to dissociate oneself from bad company and bad environments and to seek out good and pious companions who will encourage and inspire in the direction of obedience to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah ﷺ, as well as find and keep to those environments which facilitate ease in practising on Deen.

Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi رحمه الله عليه had related an incident of a tanner who was one day passing by some perfume shops. Since most of his time was occupied with tanning animal skins, he was accustomed to strong, bad smell. While passing the perfume shops, the pleasant fragrances did not agree with him and he fell down unconscious.

People gathered around him and they made every effort to revive him but no one was successful. When his brother was informed of what had happened, he went to where the tanner lay unconscious. On smelling the fragrances wafting in the air, he understood the cause of his brother's condition. Without delay, he left the scene and returned after a while, bringing in his sleeve, some faeces of a dog. When he brought his sleeve close to his brother, the bad smell immediately revived him.

All were astounded and bewildered as to what was so effective and so helpful in the tanner regaining consciousness, when all around were perfume shops and all sorts of fragrances were used in the effort to revive him.

This is just a story but with great lesson.

That person who spends his life in sins, becomes accustomed to dirty environments and dirty deeds. Good deeds are unfamiliar and foreign to the person. The person can even reach a stage where there is an aversion to good and thus he stays far away from those places and gatherings where the perfume of Allah Ta'ala's love is distributed and shared.

My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had explained that like the tanner, the sinner is unable to appreciate the gardens of Allah Ta'ala's remembrance. However, if the person is sincere, makes the effort, and begins to spend time in the environments of virtue and purity, a time will most certainly arrive when the person will acknowledge, and with great regret, that his life was wasted in filth and evil. **Now that he is accustomed to and enjoys the sweet fragrance of Allah Ta'ala's love, in these beautiful gatherings, he does not ever want to return to a life of sin; to a life of spiritual pollution.**

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq of sincere Taubah and enable us to appreciate the opportunities to attend the Majaalis of Deen and enjoy the beautiful gardens of Zikrullah as well as gain maximum benefit.

'Ghaflat (negligence / heedlessness) deadens the nerves of spirituality!'

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

12. Disobedience to Parents

ABUSING ONE’S PARENTS IS THE RECIPE FOR DISASTER in one’s life. Disobedience to parents is categorised as a *major* sin. Allah Ta’ala postpones the punishment for every sin for as long as He wishes, but the punishment which follows disobedience to parents, comes very soon.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Allah defers (the punishment of) all sins to the Day of Resurrection excepting disobedience to parents, for which Allah punishes the sinner in this life, before his death.”**²⁷

This punishment can take on various forms: sickness, failure, poverty and so forth.

Allah Ta’ala has established a system in this worldly life whereby we are treated in the manner that we treat others. If not immediately, then a time will come when we will either be mistreated and abused or respected and honoured – depending on how our relations are with others. Nabi ﷺ said: **“Whenever any young person honours an elderly person because of his old age, Allah appoints somebody who will honour him during his old age.”**²⁸

Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Be kind to your parents, your children will be kind to you...”**²⁹

²⁷ Baihaqi / Mishkaat

²⁸ Sunan Tirmidhi Hadith: 2022

²⁹ Mustadrak Hakim, Vol. 4 Pg. 154 / Daylami, Hadith: 7597

If we mistreat and disrespect our parents, we should consider that the same kind of treatment can be meted out to us from our own children. As is said, *‘What goes around, comes around.’*

It is mentioned in a Hadīth that a man asked: “What rights do parents have on their children?”

Rasulullah ﷺ replied: **“They are your Paradise or your Hell.”**³⁰

This means that our behavior and treatment towards them will determine our Akhirah. Being kind and good, and serving them will lead to Jannah, whilst ill-treating, oppressing and abusing them will lead to Jahannum.

Allah Ta’ala has made it compulsory upon us to treat our parents with respect, honour and kindness. Allah Ta’ala has, in fact, combined this Command with the Command to worship Him, clearly highlighting how important and great the rights of parents are. Allah Ta’ala says in the Qur’aan Shareef:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ
كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ۖ
وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْنِي صَغِيرًا ۝

**“AND YOUR LORD HAS DECREED THAT YOU SHOULD WORSHIP NONE BUT HIM
AND THAT YOU BE DUTIFUL TO YOUR PARENTS.**

**IF ONE OF THEM OR BOTH REACH OLD AGE IN YOUR LIFE, DO NOT SAY TO THEM
‘UFF’ (AN EXPRESSION OF IRRITATION), NOR SHOUT AT THEM, RATHER**

³⁰ Tirmidhi

ADDRESS THEM IN TERMS OF HONOUR, AND LOWER FOR THEM THE WING OF SUBMISSION AND HUMILITY THROUGH MERCY. AND SAY: ‘MY LORD! GRANT THEM YOUR MERCY AS THEY BROUGHT ME UP WHEN I WAS SMALL.’”

[SURAH AL-ISRAA 17 : 23 / 24]

Allah Ta’ala also instructs us to be grateful to our parents:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفِصْلُ فِيهِ عَامَيْنِ
أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ ط

“AND WE HAVE ENJOINED ON MAN (TO BE GOOD) TO HIS PARENTS: IN WEAKNESS DID HIS MOTHER BEAR HIM, AND TWO YEARS WAS HIS WEANING: (HEAR THE COMMAND), ‘SHOW GRATITUDE TO ME AND TO YOUR PARENTS...”

[SURAH LUQMAAN 31 : 14]

If we have wronged our parents in anyway, we should humble ourselves, seek their forgiveness, make amends, treat them with kindness and compassion and work towards fulfilling their rights. **Take their Duas through Khidmat (serving them) and kindness because special acceptance is attached to their Duas.**

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the understanding, concern and the Taufeeq of rectifying our behavior and to be obedient to Him, His Rasul ﷺ and our parents.

‘Do for Allah’s Pleasure; Allah will give you from His Treasure...’

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

13. *Sibling Rivalry*

SIBLING RIVALRY IS A COMMON SCENARIO in almost every home. Arguments and fights are everyday occurrences amongst brothers and sisters – to the extent that arguments often lead to physical fighting. This kind of response and behavior are very much against the disposition of a Muslim.

We should learn to adopt the noble and beautiful character of Rasulullah ﷺ in our dealings with all – including our brothers and sisters. It must not be that *‘we give as good as we get’*; **rather we should overlook, forgive and show to them, beautiful, gracious conduct, which they too can emulate.**

If we have knowledge of Deen, then our home and family life becomes the setting which tests our practical expression of that Ilm (knowledge) and Akhlaaq (character). We either give into nafs and shaytaan and show our brothers, sisters and parents that we are like cats and dogs fighting – and are closer to being animals than humans, or we rise above the indiscretions and mistakes of our family members, adopting good character and speech, and practicing on the Ayah:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۚ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ
عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ۝

“THE GOOD DEED AND THE EVIL DEED CANNOT BE EQUAL. REPEL (THE EVIL) WITH THAT WHICH IS BETTER (TO BE PATIENT, FORGIVE, ETC.), THEN VERILY, HE BETWEEN WHOM AND YOU THERE WAS ENMITY, (WILL BECOME) AS THOUGH HE WAS A CLOSE FRIEND.”

[SURAH FUSSILAAT 41: 34]

Rasulullah ﷺ presented to us a beautiful precedent and noble example in teaching and moulding his two grandsons, Hazrat Hasan رضي الله عنه and Hazrat Husain رضي الله عنه. Rasulullah ﷺ taught them to respect and love each other. He ﷺ taught them that the younger of them should serve the older one, due to the older brother deserving respect.

...Khidmat (serving others) naturally creates Muhabbat (Love) and how perfect a prescription for all siblings, in so far as creating a peaceful and happy environment at home. This is why we find, in the lives of the two grandsons of Rasulullah ﷺ, that Hazrat Husain رضي الله عنه used to respect Hazrat Hasan رضي الله عنه and carry out his requests willingly.

Of course, the older brother or sister should not think that he or she can just demand, dictate and nag. If we are older, we have a responsibility to show good character, worthy of our brothers and sisters to follow. **There has to be courtesy, mercy, compassion and love for the younger siblings. A balance needs to be created – where there is humility on both sides.** As the older brother, Sayyidina Hasan رضي الله عنه showed great love and compassion for Sayyidina Husain رضي الله عنه.

If one sibling has to advise the other with regard to something – for example: Salaah, food, clothing, room, studies, etc. it should be said once and politely. Thereafter, leave it to the parents or teachers to address the problem and correct.

If children are trained to emulate the grandsons of Rasulullah ﷺ, and their pure natures are protected from bad elements

such as television, cartoons, video games, etc. then there would be no bickering, quarreling and fighting – as we find in these days. Home will be a haven and parents will be at peace – with few complaints against their children.

May Allah Ta’ala grant us all the correct understanding and the Taufeeq of practising.

*“Do not go by the book of ‘My Rights’. Go by the book of Love,
Ihsaan and Khidmat.”*

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

14. Avoiding the Ash Clouds of Sins

ONE YOUNG FRIEND OF MINE, who is a pilot, had to fly to Australia. Due to ash clouds, they were told that they would not be able to depart. They were thus delayed a few days.

When he returned, I asked him: *“How were you able to return when there is still a lot of ash?”*

He said: *“They gave us a flight path where we could bypass the ash clouds. We took that route and avoided the ash.”*

I then asked him: *“Did you take any lesson from that?”*

He, in turn, asked: *“What lesson?”*

I explained: *“The lesson is this: When there was a lot of ash, there was danger that the ash cloud would damage the engine of the Boeing you were flying. Your life was in danger and the lives of all the passengers were in danger. If you were caught in such an ash cloud, you could have gone and the passengers could have gone. So they gave you a ‘round about’ route, to avoid the ash clouds and reach your destination safely.*

The lesson we take is that when there is temptation to sin, or some Fitnah³¹ approaching, we must avoid it. We must take a ‘round about’ route. If that plane crashed, lives would have gone.

³¹ Fitnah: trial / mischief

However, here, if there is a ‘crash’ – i.e. the person falls into sin, the spiritual life – Imaan – can go.”

...Some of these crashes into sins result in the death of a person's Imaan. Some pretty or handsome face takes away the Imaan of a person, or some invitation or enticement to Haraam leads to a spiritual crash.

The environment of drugs, pornography, fornication and adultery, gambling, music, etc. are like those ash clouds. The Muslim avoids all areas of sins – whether the cinemas, clubs, theatres, casinos or other venues of vice. To whatever extent he can avoid, he avoids. He takes a ‘round about’ route so that he can reach his destination safe and sound. And the destination of the Muslim is Jannah.

If there is a group of young girls who are dressed indecently and the gaze falls on them accidentally, try and avoid an encounter with them. Do not even look again. Think that the ‘ash clouds’ are approaching. ...If the person cannot lower or avert his gaze and quickly walk pass, then he must move in another direction. Cross the street. Go over to the other side. Take another route lest he gets caught in the ash cloud of Fitnah and loses his Imaan and Aakhirah.

I told this pilot friend: *“When you are flying the plane, then you avoid the ash clouds. Avoid those clouds of Fitnah as well. ...On the plane itself, there will be encounters with the air-hostesses and female passengers. At that time, guard the gaze. You must be an example. You must show to others: I am a Muslim. ...That you do not behave like how other pilots behave.”*

And the same applies to all of us. We too face different ‘ash clouds’ of Fitnah – whether on the plane or train, whether at work or in the bazaars and market places, whether at school or college. How do we respond?

Do we adopt Taqwa?

Do we fear Allah Ta’ala?

Do we take the opportunity to prove our sincere and deep love for Allah Ta’ala?

Do we subscribe to ‘*Fafirroo Ilallaah*’ – i.e. we flee to Allah Ta’ala?

Or do we recklessly ‘fly’ into the ash clouds of sins, unconcerned that we may be meeting our spiritual death?

There is no doubt that the environment around us is hazardous, dangerous and high-risk for our Imaan. Despite the conditions, a Muslim must be courageous. We do have the courage. We need to only make use of it.

So take courage! Steer the heart and body away from those ash clouds of Fitnah if we want to reach the Hereafter safely; if we want to enter Jannah without delay; and above this, if we want to earn the Pleasure of Allah Ta’ala.

How do we build up this spiritual strength so that we avoid sins like how the pilot avoids the ash clouds, or like how we would avoid a plague? ...**We work on developing the quality of Ihsaan.**

Rasulullah ﷺ explained the quality of Ihsaan as:

أَنْ تُعْبَدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

“THAT YOU WORSHIP ALLAH AS IF YOU ARE SEEING HIM, AND IF YOU CANNOT SEE HIM, THEN HE SEES YOU.”

This knowledge and this understanding have to be deeply impressed in the heart and mind: **Wherever I am, my Allah is watching.**

Allah Ta’ala says in the Qur’aan Shareef:

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمُرْصَادِ ۝

“VERILY YOUR LORD IS EVER – WATCHFUL (OVER THEM).”

[SURAH AL-FAJR 89 : 14]

Allah Ta’ala is Ever-Watchful. Each and every one of us is within His Infinite Surveillance of Sight, Hearing and Knowledge, twenty-four hours of day and night. **He has a ‘close up’ of each one of us.**

His Sight is His Sifat or attribute. He is “الْبَصِيرُ” (The All-Seeing).

A Muslim works towards developing the attribute of Ihsaan – the conscious awareness of Allah Ta’ala – in all aspects of his life. It is not confined to the different forms of Ibaadah (worship), like Salaah, Fasting, etc.; rather it should be evident across the spectrum of our lives.

Unfortunately, this quality of Ihsaan is something which is lacking in our lives. Often, when we become occupied in the worldly activities of life, we incline towards negligence. We forget that Allah Ta’ala is watching. And this ‘ghafat’ (negligence/

heedlessness) is the stepping stone to spoiling the harmony of life. This ‘ghaflat’ is the hen which lays the eggs of sins.

We then lose sight of Deen and Shari’ah, we put behind us the Khauf³², Khashiyat³³ and Muhabbat (love) of Allah Ta’ala and we carelessly move in the direction of sins.

On the other hand, if this attribute of Ihsaan is cultivated and nurtured in all aspects of life – *“That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you cannot see Him, then He sees you”* – then this is opening the doors of success in both worlds.

The person who has developed within himself the beautiful state of Ihsaan will lead a very balanced life. Temptations will come his way, but he will not fall for those temptations.

The quality of Ihsaan does not mean that shaytaan will leave him (or her) alone. Shaytaan will work harder and will continue to tempt. However, due to the conscious awareness of Allah Ta’ala, the person will not fall for temptations. He will resist them. And in this manner, he will secure the Noor³⁴ of Taqwa. In this way, he becomes the friend of Allah Ta’ala.

إِنَّا وَلِيَاؤُهُ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ

**“... VERILY NONE ARE THE AULIYA (FRIENDS OF ALLAH) EXCEPT THOSE WHO
REFRAIN FROM HIS DISOBEDIENCE...”**

[SURAH AL-ANFAAL 8 : 34]

³² Khauf: Fear

³³ Khashiyat: awe

³⁴ Noor: Spiritual effulgence/ light

The conscious awareness of Allah Ta'ala makes us apply brakes and resist the temptation to sin. If we are faced with temptation, we will move away. Wherever we feel we will be tempted, we will keep far from such areas. If an invitation to sin is extended to us, we will refuse and reject it.

Our Dua is, as my Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ said in poetry:

'(O Allah) wherever I am – whether on earth or in the skies – my Taqwa must always remain safe.'

May Allah Ta'ala keep us all in His special protection, at all times.

'Where you do not find Allah Ta'ala, distance yourself.'*
**i.e. His Pleasure*

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

15. *Company*

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS that contribute to our success in Deen, Dunya³⁵ and Akhirah is the right choice of friends and our choice of literature. Companionship and friendship are such that they benefit or destroy. Hazrat Sufyaan Thauri رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ had said: “There is nothing that corrupts a person or rectifies him more than his companion.”

As is so rightly said: “Good company will make one good and bad company will make one bad.”

In the Ahadīth, we find an excellent analogy regarding good company and bad company. Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **“A good friend and a bad friend are like a perfume-seller and a blacksmith: The perfume-seller might give you some perfume as a gift, or you might buy some from him, or at least you might smell its fragrance. As for the blacksmith, he might singe your clothes, and at the very least, you will breathe in the fumes of the furnace.”**³⁶

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ What a perfect and beautiful example! ...The good friend has a heart, a soul and actions which are fragrant with Allah Ta’ala’s love and obedience. Just sitting with him or her is akin to being in the company of a perfume-seller. Even if a person cannot afford to purchase Itr (perfume) from the perfume seller, the beautiful scent will surely offer some pleasure and joy. If one has established friendship with the perfume-seller, he may, out of kindness, gift you some of his perfume.

³⁵ Dunya: The material world

³⁶ Sahih Bukhari / Sahih Muslim

Similarly, even though we may not have the same beautiful actions, character and speech – but the effect and benefit of good, pious company will most certainly fall onto our hearts and will offer encouragement. The company of the righteous and pious inclines a person to virtuous deeds and leads to piety. This, in turn, invites a very pleasant and comfortable life and the success of both worlds, Insha-Allah.

Allah Ta’ala kindly directs us to our true friends:

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ ۝

**“YOUR (REAL) FRIENDS ARE (NO LESS THAN) ALLAH, HIS MESSENGER,
AND THE (FELLOWSHIP OF) BELIEVERS – THOSE WHO ESTABLISH REGULAR
PRAYERS, AND REGULAR CHARITY, AND THEY BOW DOWN HUMBLY
(IN WORSHIP).”**

[SURAH AL-MAA’IDAH 5 : 58]

On one occasion, Rasulullah ﷺ was asked: “Which of our companions are best?”

Rasulullah ﷺ replied: **“One whose appearance reminds you of Allah, and whose speech increases you in knowledge, and whose actions remind you of the Hereafter.”**³⁷

...A friend in Deen is a friend indeed!

We should make it binding upon ourselves to attend or listen to the programmes of our ‘Ulama-e-Haq and Mashaa’ikh, read their books and benefit from the wonderful blessings of the knowledge and guidance which they share.

³⁷ Al-Muntakhab, Hadith: 630 / Abu Ya’la Hadith: 2437

As for the bad friend: His heart, his soul and his actions have a connection with the fire of Hell. When a person's heart is ablaze with the fire of sins, what goodness can he offer? There will be no fragrance; only the unpleasant smell of smoke, which will soon affect the spiritual 'senses'.

One's Imaan is affected.

One's A`maal (actions) are affected.

There is darkness and restlessness in such company.

In keeping bad company, sooner or later, the person will become involved in the same kind of sins: adultery, music, drugs, raves, pornography, theft, vulgarity and so forth – as well as the problems and harms which follow. ...Many have personally told me that it was their 'friend' who introduced them to such vices.

If the friend or friends are materialistically and worldly inclined, then this companionship will create within a person, the desire for material things. He or she will become materialistic as well, and inevitably, the love of worldly things will also pave the path to sins. Rasulallah ﷺ said: **"The love of the world is the root of all evil."**³⁸

Many befriend non-Muslims or atheists and are then left in doubt about Islamic beliefs and teachings – to the extent of even inclining towards rejection of Allah Ta'ala.

It is for these reasons that Rasulallah ﷺ said: **"A person is on the Deen (way of life) of his friend; so every one of you should look at who he befriends."**³⁹

³⁸ Mishkaat

³⁹ Abu Dawood / Tirmidhi

...It is the nature of man to 'steal' from the character of others, so much so that he would even adopt the same way of life, culture **and would even accept the religion of his friend.**

One young girl e-mailed me and said that her Christian 'friend' convinced her that Christianity was the religion to follow and she accepted it. Her argument was that she did not see herself to be accountable for her choice since it was her fate to become a Christian. ...And we seek protection in Allah Ta'ala.

Her reasoning clearly indicated the great, great need to learn Islam and understand Islam. There was no proper understanding.

What led this girl away from Islam, from Belief in One Allah? Why did she choose to believe in an illogical ideology of three is equal to one and one is equal to three? Why?

...Company.

The Wrong Company. Bad Company.

So we find that many who befriend those who disbelieve in Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah ﷺ, even adopt the beliefs of such 'friends', discarding their only passport to Jannah (paradise), and returning to the Hereafter as losers.

This 'friendship' was the cause of Salaah being neglected, the Islamic dressing and identity being discarded, Haraam being consumed, and then the spiritual corrosion and deterioration, which even led the person out of the fold of Islam. (May Allah Ta'ala protect us).

Allah Ta'ala cautions us in the Qur'aan Shareef repeatedly:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ط
أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ٥

“O YOU WHO BELIEVE! DO NOT TAKE THE DISBELIEVERS FOR FRIENDS INSTEAD OF THE BELIEVERS. DO YOU WANT TO PRODUCE BEFORE ALLAH A CLEAR EVIDENCE AGAINST YOURSELVES?”

[SURAH AN-NISAA 4: 144]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ

“O YOU WHO BELIEVE, DO NOT TAKE THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIANS FOR INTIMATE FRIENDS...”

[SURAH AL-MAA'IDAH 5: 51]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ
وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۚ

“O YOU WHO BELIEVE! DO NOT TAKE MY ENEMIES AND YOUR ENEMIES AS FRIENDS, INCLINING TOWARDS THEM WITH LOVE. VERILY, THEY HAVE REJECTED THE TRUTH WHICH HAS COME TO YOU (FROM YOUR RABB)...”

[SURAH AL-MUMTAHINA 60 : 1]

Visiting non-Muslims when they are sick, helping them in need, etc. are teachings of Islam. We should be kind to our non-Muslim neighbours. We should meet them to explain to them our beliefs and practices, to invite them to Islam. However, to make non-Muslims intimate friends, bosom friends – picnicking together, joining in their parties, shows, religious ceremonies and other

festivities, will lead to following their ways and will greatly harm a person's Deen.

Moreover, company is not only 'physical'. Novels, magazines, comics, films, the internet, social media and so forth, offer companionship as well. Characters in books, authors and journalists, actors and actresses, pop-stars and singers, sportsmen and sportswomen, sorcerers and magicians, atheists and satanists and many others, manipulate the person's behaviour and thinking. ...We see the tremendous influence of literature and media in our lives? It is as clear as daylight.

We therefore need to be very selective regarding who we take as our friends and what literature we read. These are two very influential means, which can either make us successful or can make us failures – in both worlds.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us good and pious companions and make us good and pious companions.

*'Say good-bye to that friendship which distances
you from Allah Ta'ala.'*

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

16. Who are our Role Models?

NOWADAYS, WE LOOK AT SOCCER PLAYERS, cricket players, rugby players, actors, actresses, musicians and others, and we take them as our role models. We want to identify ourselves with them – but most of them are not Believers in Allah Ta’ala. They have rejected Allah Ta’ala. They have no Noor of Imaan, no Noor of Taqwa – nothing. They pass their lives in heedlessness and in the disobedience of Allah Ta’ala.

Often, the lifestyle of many of these celebrities is the cause of their own destruction. They wreck and ruin their lives in all kinds of vices – drugs, drink, fornication, etc. Their immoral habits and corrupt ways make them bad role models. The end results are also damaging and even ‘toxic’ for those who revere them, obsess over them and imitate them.

As Muslims, we have ideal role models in our Beloved Rasul ﷺ and the Ambiyaa عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام; as well as the Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ and Auliya who follow them. They were the most successful people. Were we to learn about them, we will draw great inspiration and will find them to be the best role models.

The Sahabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were MEN – and very Brave Men. Their achievements, feats and conquests drown the thousands of insignificant and frivolous goals scored by soccer players or runs scored by cricket players or wins scored by others. How will these goals and runs benefit in the grave and in the Hereafter?

...The song and dance, the acting and performances of the others will only be a cause of great regret in the Court of Allah Ta’ala.

The Sahabah-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ achieved tremendous success because their lives were constructive, productive and profitable – for their Deen, Dunya and Aakhirah. ...In the effort to emulate them, we will gain the Muhabbat of Allah Ta’ala and Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, the wealth of peace, happiness and contentment, and Insha-Allah, reap the blessings and success of both worlds.

Read about the youth amongst the Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ. Their obedience in the prime of youth and their spirit of sacrifice offer great inspiration for all.

Hazrat Mus’ab Ibn Umair رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was an extremely handsome young man. He grew up in the lap of wealth and luxury and was the most well-dressed of the youth in Makkah Sharief. For the sake of Islam and in his love for Allah Ta’ala, he gave up everything. Look at the honour Allah Ta’ala gave him in this life, at the time of death and until Qiyamah. He will always be remembered for his noble sacrifices and great contributions to Islam.

Read the stories of Hazrat Abdullah ibn Abbaas, Hazrat Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, Hazrat Abdullah ibn Umar, Hazrat Abdullah ibn Zubair, Hazrat Usama ibn Zaid and so many other young Sahabah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ – who spent their youth in the obedience of Allah Ta’ala. What greatness Allah Ta’ala bestowed upon them in this life. In the Hereafter, will be greater honour and high, lofty ranks in Jannah.

Our daughters should read the very motivating and inspirational biographies of the wives, daughters and companions of Nabi صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, as well as other pious women. This will be a catalyst towards living a life of piety and enjoying real happiness and true success.

17. Pornography

WE ALL KNOW THAT FISH LIVE IN WATER. They generally cannot survive long out of water. However, when fish move towards the surface of the ocean, they become easy catch for fishermen – like we find with the sardine run. People just grab, net and catch sardines from the surface of the water.

And when a fisherman catches a fine fish, he reels it in. He does not throw it back into the sea. Once it is hooked ... once it is caught ... it is pulled out. ...Why? Because fish out of water, when scaled and washed, when '*masaalaad*⁴⁰' and fried, tastes nice.

In my Dua, I normally say: ***O Allah, make us the fish that swim deep down in the ocean of Your Ma'rifat.***

Like the fish, the Believer is swimming deep in the safety of Allah Ta'ala's ocean of love. If he moves towards temptation, he makes an easy and fine catch for shaytaan.

Do we want to become a meal for shaytaan? ...Because this is exactly what happens to the heart of the Believer who dashes for the bait of sins: His Imaan is 'scaled', his good deeds are 'washed away', his heart and soul are 'marinated' in darkness and fried in the fire of restlessness – to the delight of shaytaan. Allah Ta'ala forbid that this restless soul has to also one day contend with the fire of Hell.

⁴⁰ '*Masaalaad*': spiced and marinated

Many write that they are hooked onto porn films and porn magazines. They fall for the bait which shaytaan tempts them with, get hooked and end up ruining their spiritual, mental and physical health.

Pornography is one of the root causes of insanity. ...Those who have the habit of viewing pornography generally do so at night. They spend the day working and the night watching filth. They are overcome with restlessness and are deprived of sleep. Sleep deprivation is a one way ticket to mental instability. In the long term, the brain is badly damaged, and the person loses his sanity. He ends up in an asylum or shoots himself.

One young brother contacted me saying that he had had a porn addiction. He knew it is Haraam but said he just could not give up the sin. He would secretly watch pornography, late at night, after the family went to sleep. And then, one night, whilst watching porn, there was a tremor.

The building began to shake and everyone got up, running down the stairs in their pyjamas, running helter skelter, fearing the worst, expecting that was their end. He said that at that time, my Dua hit his heart: ***O Allah! Do not let the Angel of death find us in any sin, in gambling, drinking, pornography!***

He immediately made sincere Taubah. But it took a real life shake up to get him to give up the sin. He was fortunate that he was granted the opportunity of repenting, otherwise what would have been the condition, returning to Allah Ta'ala whilst viewing pornography?

I generally give the following reply to those who write, saying they are addicted to porn:

Allah Ta'ala forbid, if some criminal has to put a gun to your head, will you say: 'It is difficult for me to stop watching this porn. I am addicted. Please allow me to watch all these filthy pictures first before you blow my head.' ...Or will you start reading Duas for Allah Ta'ala to protect you?

Death is following us all. What if the Angel of Death visits at that time to extract your soul? Would you want your life to end while watching porn – because the Angel of Death will not give you time to switch off the computer and make Taubah?

Imagine if you die whilst viewing pornography. What an embarrassment and disgrace! Thereafter, people will ask – as is common: How did he die? ...When? ...Where? ...What was he doing? – Would you like that people say: “He died in front of the computer and he was watching a dirty film.”?

Rasulullah ﷺ was asked: “What is Imaan?”

Rasulullah ﷺ replied: **“When your good deeds give you happiness and when your evil deeds cause you grief.”**⁴¹

If reading porn magazines, watching filthy movies, being involved in some illicit relationship, drinking, gambling and indulging in other sins do not create any remorse and sorrow and instead we are expressing happiness over sins, where is our Imaan?

One situation is that the person engages in some sin but then genuinely regrets. However, when there is persistence and enjoyment in sins, where is Imaan?

Deriving pleasure in Haraam indicates to pollution in the heart.

⁴¹ Musnad Ahmad

The heart needs to be washed and cleaned with sincere Taubah and needs to be polished with Zikrullah.

At least recognize sin as sin. Detest it. This is Imaan. The person has Imaan if he is feeling unhappy and grieved when he has displeased Allah Ta'ala.

Understand that whatever Allah Ta'ala enjoins upon us and forbids us from is in our best interests; for our benefit, advantage, well-being and success.

Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mubarak رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, who was a great Wali of Allah Ta'ala, summed up the consequences of sins, saying: **"I see that sins cause death to the heart and becoming addicted to sins brings about humiliation and disgrace. On the other hand, abandoning sins gives life to the heart. So it is best for you to disobey the nafs and give up sins."**

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to give up all sins and purify our hearts and souls, and may Allah Ta'ala grant us death, when He is pleased with us.

"For the Seeker of Allah Ta'ala, his concern at every step is: Is my Allah pleased with this step?"

When he speaks: Is my Allah pleased with this speech?

On his every action: Is my Allah pleased with this action?"

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

18. Nets and Webs

FISHERMEN CAST THEIR RODS AND AWAIT A CATCH. Others cast nets and trap big shoals. The spider spins its web and catches its prey. Nafs and shaytaan have also cast their rods and nets, and they have also spun their webs.

Huge shoals are being caught on M-Net, East-Net and other nets of shaytaan to be found on television. Added to this, many, many more are captured and entangled in the porn and other filthy websites on the Internet or on social networks. ...Health, wealth and the most precious commodities of Imaan and Hayaa⁴² are sacrificed for a few moments of Haraam pleasure.

As a measure of protection, the computer should be kept in a place where there is a lot of activity by family members. This will be a deterrent to the person who finds himself weak before nafs. Keeping the computer in the family room or where members of the family pass by or spend time, will restrain the person from visiting porn and other immoral and filthy websites, Insha-Allah.

If the person is in his office or elsewhere, where he will be alone when using the computer, he should have a note placed above the screen, with bold writing:

ALLAH IS WATCHING!!! or

‘WHAT IF?’

(i.e. What if the Angel of death visits whilst engaged in Haraam?)

⁴² Hayaa : Modesty

If the cellphone is the temptation to view Haraam, then opt for a cellphone which is simple and does not have those features which offer access to Haraam. Or have the same reminder on your cellphone screen.

Our Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, had said in poetry:

***“If you hide and commit sins,
Someone is watching from above...”***

We should keep before us that our every movement, our every word, our every thought and our every feeling are in the Knowledge, Sight and Hearing of Allah Ta’ala. The Mashaa’ikh have prescribed that we reflect, ponder and keep before us these Aayaat (verses) of the Qur’aan Shareef:

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ط

“HE IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU ARE...”

[SURAH AL-HADEED 57 : 4]

and:

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى ۖ

“DOES HE NOT KNOW THAT ALLAH IS WATCHING (HIM)?”

[SURAH AL ‘ALAQ 96 : 14]

The conscious awareness of Allah Ta’ala becomes a barrier to sins and a means of purification of the heart. Nabi صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was asked: “How can one purify and develop himself?”

Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ answered: **“He should always remember that Allah is with him wherever he is.”**⁴³

⁴³ Al Mu’jamus Saghir / Sunanul Kubra / Shu’abul Iman

We should also keep before us that we are in the constant attendance of the Angels, Kiraman Kaatibeen, who are recording all our actions.

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ۖ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ۖ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۖ

**“BUT VERILY OVER YOU (ARE APPOINTED ANGELS) TO PROTECT YOU;
KIND AND HONOURABLE, WRITING DOWN (YOUR DEEDS).
THEY KNOW (AND UNDERSTAND) ALL THAT YOU DO.”**

[SURAH INFITAAR 82 : 10 / 11 / 12]

May Allah Ta’ala bless us with the quality of Ihsaan and protect us from all sins.

‘Like an elevator that goes up and comes down, Imaan goes up with good deeds and comes down with sins. Whilst an elevator can only reach a certain level, there is no limit to the stages of Imaan.’

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

19. No, It's Not On!

ONCE, WHILST WALKING ON A PAVEMENT, I saw the word **“NO”** painted on the cement of the pavement.

A pedestrian would read **“ON”** walking in the one direction and would read **“NO”**, walking in the opposite direction.

This made me think of the never-ending efforts of shaytaan and nafs in enticing and persuading us to engage in sins. ...Shaytaan and nafs are very quick in glorifying sins, saying to us, **“It’s ON!”**

This is a common catch-phrase, used to confirm an illicit meeting, or some party, or some get-together, whether at a rave club, cinema or casino. For many, that is the place to be and the thing to do because they anticipate some kind of fun, entertainment and enjoyment.

When a Muslim is faced with such an invitation to sin or is tempted to disobey Allah Ta’ala and Rasulullah ﷺ, he boldly and assertively responds: “NO, it’s not On!”

He addresses his nafs:

*“Agreed, there is a little stolen pleasure in sin
But what great rebellion this is against the Sustainer (Allah Ta’ala)
(That you use His bounties to disobey Him).
A little while of pleasure and everlasting regret;
What stupidity it is to bury the Janaza of respect and honour.”⁴⁴*

⁴⁴ Poetry of Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

“It’s ON!” is also a phrase which confirms a fight to take place or a fight that has started. When a person is challenged to a fight – perhaps after school or college – then if the person accepts, he says: **“It’s On!”** He accepts the challenge with resolve and firmness that he will win.

...Of course, such fights or scuffles are not condoned and are not permissible. Muslims are not thugs, bullies or hooligans.

However, what is definitely ON – what is confirmed – is the fight and Jihaad against nafs and shaytaan! The person resolves to strive against nafs and shaytaan in his efforts to please Allah Ta’ala – and is also determined to win.

So take courage! Allah Ta’ala is on your side. You will have the support and assistance of the One Who is All Powerful and Almighty.

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the courage to say no to all invitations and temptations to sins and to strive against our enemies, nafs and shaytaan.

‘Happiness lies in restraining oneself from Haraam.’

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

20. *A Muslim's Ambition*

AFTER BIRDS ARE HATCHED, they raise their heads up – often with their beaks wide open, waiting for their food. As nestlings and fledglings, their gazes are constantly upward. From another angle, their Taqdeer (destiny) is to fly. They were born to fly. So very possibly their gazes are also towards the sky anticipating that they will soon fly high.

When these fledglings have their new feathers, they emerge from their nest so that they can learn to fly. For some, their parents or the other adult birds give them flying lessons, teaching them how to glide in the air, how to land, etc. **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ** We see Allah Ta'ala's Qudrat in all of His creation.

On the other hand, we find that animals such as cows, donkeys, mules, horses, zebras and others are created in such a way that they pass most of their lives with their gazes downward, towards the earth. This is their Taqdeer – to remain on the earth; to graze off the earth. They will not be flying.

The Muslim who is desirous of gaining the closeness of Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul ﷺ has the gaze of his heart upward, towards the heavens. His thoughts and his aspiration are: *I want to reach Allah Ta'ala. I want to reach Jannah.*

So his efforts are channeled in the direction of Allah Ta'ala's obedience, nurturing Allah Ta'ala's Love in his heart and following the beautiful Sunnah of Rasulullah ﷺ. With the guidance

and direction of a Shaykh-e-Kaamil, he learns to fly spiritually. With the wings of Taqwa, he takes flight from any venue of sin, flying far away from everything displeasing to his Beloved Allah Ta'ala! By so doing, he gains Allah Ta'ala's Qurb (nearness) and Allah Ta'ala's Pleasure.

As for the one who is only absorbed and infatuated with this material world, his or her gaze and attention is constantly directed downward, towards the commodities of this world – on clothes, shoes, jewellery, cellphones, cars, palatial homes and other material items. All of which have their origin in sand and all of which will return to sand. Nothing of Dunya is made to last.

Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi رَمِيهِ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ had explained: *“Your hearts are attached to the things of the world, which have their origin in sand. The women of the world are created from sand, the homes are of sand and the food is of sand. **Everything is of sand. They only appear in different forms and colours. The end result is also sand.**”*

Anyone who gives his or her heart to this world fills the heart with the ‘sand’ of this world. Sand upon sand! Life is wasted on sand. The mind becomes clouded and blinded by the sand of Dunya and forgetful of the objective of living in this world.

A person who is deceived by the outward glitter and glamour passes through life ‘grazing’ upon the things of Dunya, depriving himself or herself of the wonderful enjoyment of flying high in the obedience of Allah Ta'ala and striving to earn His Pleasure and Jannah.

We should understand that ‘Dunya’ is that which makes a person forget Allah Ta’ala – the Giver of all the unlimited bounties and gifts that we are blessed with. The love of the world (Hubbud-Dunya) makes a person neglect and even reject the Commandments of Allah Ta’ala; makes a person distance himself from his Creator and paves the path to Jahannum. This worldly life was for us to accumulate the provisions for the Hereafter. The worldly life was not to amass the commodities of Dunya and not for us to give our hearts and souls to it.

If the heart turns to Allah Ta’ala, we will find that what is with Allah Ta’ala is best and everlasting!

فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَّاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ۝

“WHATEVER YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN, IS MERELY A PROVISION FOR THE TRANSITORY LIFE OF THIS WORLD, AND THAT WHICH IS WITH ALLAH IS BETTER AS WELL AS MORE LASTING. THAT IS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED AND PUT THEIR TRUST IN THEIR LORD.”

[SURAH ASH-SHURA 42:36]

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى ۝

“YOU PREFER THE WORLDLY LIFE (TO THE HEREAFTER), WHEREAS THE HEREAFTER IS BEST AND EVER-LASTING.”

[SURAH AL-A'LA : 16-17]

The bird eats and drinks and with the strength that is gained, it flies high. Similarly, the Muslim who wants to fly, who wants to soar spiritually, eats and drinks and makes use of the material things of this world so that he may fly. He lives in this world and

utilizes the worldly means. However, despite his apparent association with the earth, he keeps in mind that he is created for the Aakhirah – which is superior. He understands that this world is not home. Home is Jannah.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Verily, the world has been created for you and you have been created for the Hereafter.”**⁴⁵

From amongst the diversity of birds, let us be like the falcon which flies high and flies at great speed. And if we become the royal falcon, we will find a place in the court of the King of kings – Allah Ta’ala. Let us not be like the vulture that scavenges and feasts off carcasses. ...And, indeed, the world is even more insignificant to Allah Ta’ala than a carcass is to us.

It has been related that once Rasulullah ﷺ passed by the market place and came across a dead kid goat (i.e. a baby goat) which had very short ears. Rasulullah ﷺ held it by its ears and said: *“Who amongst you would like to have this for a Dirham*⁴⁶*?”*

The Sahabah رضى الله عنهم said: *“We would not want it even for less than that! What can we do with it?”*

He ﷺ said: *“Do you wish to have it for any price?”*

They said: *“By Allah, even if it were alive, we would not want it, as it has very short ears, let alone now when it is also dead!”*

⁴⁵ Shu’abul Imaan 10581

⁴⁶ Dirham: Silver coin

Rasulullah ﷺ said: ***“By Allah, this world is more insignificant to Allah than this (dead goat) is to you.”***⁴⁷

In another Hadīth, Rasulullah ﷺ said: ***“If this world was worth the wing of a mosquito in the sight of Allah, He would not have given a disbeliever a single sip of water.”***⁴⁸

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the reality and insignificance of this worldly life, remove the love of Dunya from our hearts, and fill our hearts with His Pure Love.

“When it comes to demanding a dress or money or some toy, a child begins to cry and insist: ‘I must have it! I must have it!’

Learn from that child. ‘Insist’: ‘O Allah, I must have Your Love.’”

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

⁴⁷ Sahih Muslim

⁴⁸ Tirmidhi

21. Evidence of Sins

DESTROY THE REMINDERS AND EVIDENCE OF SIN AND EVIL. They are stepping-stones to returning to the same sins. Reminders include photographs of those places where sins were committed; even if the pictures are not animate.

...When a person will see the photograph of the hotel, tourist resort, etc. where he committed Zina (fornication / adultery), shaytaan will take him down memory lane and give him the Haraam enjoyment of his past sin. This, in turn, could lead to the sin itself.

If some gift was given by an illicit beloved, destroy it or give it away.

One should also not diarise sins as is the habit of so many. Many girls keep diaries, with even locks and keys. ...If these diaries are opened by others, pages of sins indulged in, of fancies and fantasies are revealed, and the person suffers embarrassment and humiliation.

Similarly, smses, e-mails and photographs are saved on cell-phones or computers, or letters and faxes are stored away. Nowadays, there are announcements and broadcasts of sins on social media. **All can be implicating evidence against a person and can lead to not only disgrace, but distrust and even the dissolution of friendship and marriage, later on in life. Many have been blackmailed with such evidence.**

There have been incidents of families that had met up with accidents, or were victims of hijackings or robberies, and all members were killed. ...These are happenings that we hear of and read of these days.

Thereafter, other members of the family had to sort out the estate, and that was when the dark secrets were exposed.

A person contacted me regarding an inheritance matter and related that an entire family was killed in an accident – the husband, wife and children. Other members of the family had to enter the home to sort out the estate. On opening the one cupboard, they were shocked to find porn magazines, porn films, etc. ...Is this not embarrassment and disgrace?

We should keep in mind that one day someone will be sorting out our belongings and all will be exposed. So do not delay. Turn to Allah Ta'ala in sincere repentance. Delete and destroy any evidence of sins to avoid the risk of scandal, gossip and humiliation.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the realization that death can visit at any time and that evidence of sins opens doors of problems and disgrace.

‘The brake of the remembrance of death restrains the vehicle of life from the accidents of sin.’

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

22. *A Means of Protection*

IN MY DUA, I ALWAYS MAKE MENTION that we inevitably have to depart from this world. Death is a certainty. However, its time is unknown. Since we do not know where and when and how we are going to die, how can we be engaged in sin?

So when making Dua, I say: ***O Allah, it must not be that the Angel of Death visits anyone of us when we are in sins, when popping drugs into our mouths, or when we have a bottle of liquor in our hands, or when we are in a casino or an escort agency, or in adultery and fornication, or watching some filthy movie or reading a filthy novel or magazine.***

Alhamdulillah, this Dua has been a means of guidance and protection for many who found their evil habits difficult to give up. When the thought of death and this Dua flashed before them, someone dashed out of a casino, another distanced himself from an escort agency, and others opted for abstinence and self-restraint. ...The remembrance of death becomes a barrier between a person and sin.

I often say we get instant tea, instant coffee, instant pudding, instant cereal, and so many other things have become ‘instant’. ...We are living in such a time, when death too has become ‘instant’.

The trap of shaytaan is that he whispers: *“There’s still time. You’re still young!”* Dispel the myth that it’s early. Death does not wait.

My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would present the following questions for reflection:

❶ Is sin *good* or *bad* ?

...The answer would be, '*Bad*'.

❷ Should a bad thing be given up or not ?

...*It should be given up.*

❸ Should it be given up *quickly* or *slowly* ?

...*Quickly.*

❹ Should it be given up *before* death or *after* death ?

...*Before death.*

❺ Who knows when death will pay its only visit ?

We know fully well that sins should be given up before death. We also know that the time of death is unknown, and there is no delay and no escape from it. Should sin then not be given up *immediately*? Is there even any time to think when to give it up? ...The time to give up sin is now.

My Shaykh رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ composed a couplet that spells out this reality, which we should reflect over:

*“Strange is the visa of life;
It can be cancelled at any time.
The duration of its validity is unknown
And its extension too, impossible.”*

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the understanding and the Taufeeq of sincere Taubah (repentance) before our return to Him.

23. The Dress of the Muslim

IT IS VERY COMMON AMONGST THE YOUTH to emulate the dress-code and ways of the non-Muslims. Hollywood, Bollywood, western and eastern fashion, lifestyle and culture are the pursuit, interest and fixation.

I have mentioned to boys and girls and even adults, that the dressing which is according to the Sunnah, greatly benefits in different ways. This dressing of the Kurta, pants above the ankle and Topee/Amamah for the men, and the Hijaab and Niqaab for the women has Noor.

When the Sunnah dressing is adopted, Noor enters the heart and results in piety being nurtured in the heart, character and speech. There is an immediate effect and improvement in a person's spirituality and behaviour.

The Sunnah dressing is also extremely modest and simple. As such, modesty and simplicity are also cultivated in the person. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **"Simplicity is a part of Imaan"** ⁴⁹ and: **"Modesty is a branch of Faith."**

Rasulullah ﷺ also said: **"Hayaa (modesty) does not bring anything except good."**⁵⁰

Where there is modesty, there is also purity – purity in actions, speech and thoughts.

⁴⁹ Abu Dawood

⁵⁰ Sahih Bukhari

Another benefit of the noble dress-code of Islam is that it becomes a barrier and a protection from sins. It becomes so much easier to stay away from sins. The person who is dressed in a Kurta or the sister who is in Hijaab and Niqaab will stay far away from committing any open sin, going to places such as cinemas, concerts, clubs and other evil venues. There is that understanding that this dress represents piety and others look upon such a person as pious. It would be most inappropriate to be present at places of sins.

I advise and encourage all the brothers, young and old, who are not in the habit of wearing the Kurta, to commence by wearing it for the Fardh Salaah. **Salaah demands respect. Being in the House of Allah Ta’ala also demands respect and dignity.** In answering the call to Salaah, also respond to the Command of Allah Ta’ala regarding our dressing for Salaah.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا اٰدَمُ خُذُوْا زِيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ

“O CHILDREN OF AADAM, TAKE ON YOUR ADORNMENT AT EVERY MASJID...”

[SURAH AL-A’RAAF 7 : 31]

Wearing short sleeves, tight fitting pants, performing the Salaah bare-headed, etc. goes against the grain of respect and is Makrooh (extremely disliked).

If a person wears the Sunnah Libaas, five times a day, for Salaah, he will, Insha-Allah, see that day where he will cast off the western attire and adopt the beautiful Sunnah dressing full time, with great love and happiness. He will establish great affinity with the Sunnah and will lose interest in the ways of the non-Muslims.

Very sadly, so many of our sisters go out ill-clad – wearing immodest, revealing and modern garb, and they beautify and perfume themselves. They then become targets of filthy, lustful glances and even physical and verbal harassment. In a society wherein evil and obscenity abound, rape has a ‘visual’ dimension as well.

Allah Ta’ala revealed the laws of Hijaab in various Aayaat (verses) of the Qur’aan Shareef. Hijaab identifies a woman as a respectable woman and safeguards her from harassment, which is otherwise so common today.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ط

ذَلِكَ أَذْنَىٰ أَنْ يَعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ

“O NABI! TELL YOUR WIVES AND YOUR DAUGHTERS AND THE WOMEN OF THE BELIEVERS TO DRAW THEIR CLOAKS (VEILS) ALL OVER THEIR BODIES (I.E. SCREEN THEMSELVES COMPLETELY). THAT WILL BE BETTER, THAT THEY SHOULD BE KNOWN (AS FREE RESPECTABLE WOMEN) SO AS NOT TO BE ANNOYED....”

[SURAH AL-AHZAAB 33 : 59]

Our sisters should look towards the wives and daughters of Rasulullah ﷺ as well as the Sahabiyaat رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُنَّ as role models. Emulate them in dress, deed and demeanour. Their modesty, piety, devotion and virtuous conduct earned them great honour and success, in both worlds, and made them beloved to Allah Ta’ala. Aspire for this!

In contrast, when the dressing of the Kuffaar is adopted, Zulmat (darkness) enters the heart and this darkness then becomes apparent in the person's character, actions and speech. Darkness spreads in his or her life.

Another attribute of the dress of the Kuffaar is that of immodesty and lewdness. This kind of dressing destroys the inherent shyness and inhibition of a person. Very quickly, the nature of a person becomes spoiled – becomes immodest, indecent; even obscene. We see the end results of emulating actors, actresses, singers and others: smoking, drugs, alcohol, swearing, vulgarity, illicit relationships, fornication and other vices.

Wearing the dress of the Kuffaar indicates spiritual weakness and reveals one's affiliation and love for the non-Muslims. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Whoever imitates a nation will be counted among them.”**⁵¹

Their degenerate culture encourages girls to look like boys and boys to look like girls. Identity is totally lost and natural characteristics are ruined.

Allah Ta'ala has defined the most perfect and most beautiful dress-code for men and women. Various Ahadith offer us guidelines and details regarding our dressing. We should acquaint ourselves with this knowledge and implement it practically.

The attire of a Muslim is extremely important. It is our identity. We should not be embarrassed or ashamed to be recognized as

⁵¹ Abu Dawood

Muslims and as followers of our Beloved Rasul ﷺ . We should be desirous of having this resemblance with our Nabi ﷺ . Moreover, our dressing makes us ambassadors, representatives and flag-bearers of this beautiful Deen, without any effort. ...Alhamdulillah, the Sunnah dressing has been a means of many people embracing Islam.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the courage and the Taufeeq of adopting the Sunnah dressing, practising on all of Deen, and obtaining the great benefits and rewards.

‘There is Perfection in Nabi ﷺ and the Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ were a Reflection of Nabi ﷺ .’

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

24. Alternatives

AS HUMAN BEINGS, WE KEEP OURSELVES OCCUPIED in something or the other. Our work or whatever activity we are involved in is either good or bad.

If it is bad, then it has to be given up. Sins must be given up. Sometimes a person wants to give up his sins, but complains that he will then have nothing to do. The solution is to replace the bad with the good. He has to have some alternative or substitute – to take the place of sin. But this substitute must be beneficial and virtuous. It must not be futile and useless.

There was an incident of a thief, who used to steal the shoes of the Musallees whilst they were engaged in Salaah, in the Masjid. Allah Ta'ala destined Hidayah (guidance) for him and subsequently he met a pious Shaykh, a Wali of Allah Ta'ala. The thief made sincere Taubah from his sins and even took Bay'ah (pledge of allegiance) at the hand of the Wali.

Although he quit his habit of stealing completely, the habit to still do something had become ingrained and strong in him. Instead of stealing, he would merely mix up the shoes of the Musallees.

Naturally, this angered the Musallees, since it inconvenienced them and delayed their work. On investigation, they found out who was responsible and informed the Shaykh.

The Shaykh, after meeting with the Mureed, who had repented from stealing, questioned him regarding his strange behavior and his causing difficulty to others. The person very honestly told his Shaykh that he had sincerely repented from the sin of stealing but he just *had* to do something, so he mixed the shoes every time the Musallees came to the Masjid for Salaah. ...After a few days, with the Fadhl of Allah Ta'ala and the Duas of the Shaykh, he got out of that habit as well.

If a person does not occupy himself, then as we know: *“An idle mind is the devil’s workshop!”* **Do not let shaytaan enjoy rent-free accommodation in your mind! Do not allow shaytaan any access into your heart!**

If a person does not keep himself occupied in good deeds, he is likely to get occupied in bad deeds.

Prior to accepting Islam, during the days of Jahiliyyah (ignorance), the Sahaba-e-Kiraam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ were involved in all kinds of sinful actions – wine, women, war, singing girls and other Haraam was the order of the day. However, on entering the fold of Islam, all of these vices were replaced with virtues. For example: Music, singing girls and other Haraam entertainment were replaced with the beautiful, enjoyable recitation of the Qur’aan Shareef, Tahajjud Salaah and spending the night communicating with their Beloved Allah Ta’ala. Jihaad was no longer against just anyone and everyone; it was against the nafs, primarily.

In practising on the teachings of Islam and following the noble Sunnah, there is no scope for boredom. The person who tastes the

sweetness of Qur'aan Shareef, Zikrullah, Durood Shareef, Dua and Salaah will never be bored.

We take the lesson that sins should be replaced with good and rewarding alternatives, or permissible and lawful substitutes.

Alhamdulillah, in our times, there is so much to keep occupied with. Our 'Ulama-e-Haq and Mashaa'ikh have many programmes, which, if we attend, we can maintain our Istiqaamah (steadfastness) on Deen. In fact, we should attend these programmes regularly. It will be a means of spiritual nourishment and spiritual health and a fortification against sins. If attending the programmes is not always possible, the same can be audio-streamed, downloaded, etc. The books of our 'Ulama and Mashaa'ikh are also available whereby we can take benefit and inspiration.

Alhamdulillah, the work of Tabligh, the effort of the Khanqahs, the effort to acquire the knowledge of Deen, the undertakings made to assist the poor, needy and others, etc. have been a means of great goodness and productivity for many – who then channel their energies and time in serving Deen, going out in the path of Allah Ta'ala, benefitting others, becoming involved in relief work – within the parameters of Deen, and fulfilling the true objective of this worldly life.

In fact, the effort of Islaah (reformation) should keep us well-occupied. Hazrat Sufyaan Thauri رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had said: "Rectifying yourself is an endeavour that should keep you very busy."

Islam is not only about sitting on the Musallah the entire day and night, or just attending programmes all the time. There is a perfectly healthy balance that Deen offers us. Since Allah Ta'ala knows all our needs, He has presented us with the Sunnah, which is fully wholesome and practical, and which preserves the heart, soul, mind and body. We find beautiful guidance in every aspect of life. Since we deprive the nafs of Haraam, we do not have to deprive it of Halaal.

Together with making the effort in good deeds, serving the creation and also seeking to serve this beautiful Deen, we are allowed some recreation and leisurely activities – which will benefit us physically. In fact, if the right intentions are made, these activities will become greatly rewarding.

We are directed towards activities such as swimming, archery and horse-riding. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Any action without the remembrance of Allah is either a diversion or heedlessness excepting four acts: Walking from target to target (during archery practice), training a horse, playing with one's family, and learning to swim.”**⁵²

Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه had also advised: “Teach your children swimming, archery and horse riding.”

Of course, this should not be taken out of context or used to justify Haraam. The Ahadīth encourage these activities, but within the limits and boundaries of Deen and Shari’ah. There is no allowance for immodest dressing, intermingling with the opposite

⁵² Tabarani

gender or attending sports matches at stadiums where there will be indulgence in all kinds of Haraam. This is obviously not permissible – and for good reason: To protect us from sins.

We should similarly abstain from useless and futile pursuits. Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had said that if a person reflects on his futile acts and statements, he will most assuredly discover that they ultimately lead to sin because there is no futile and nonsensical act whose boundary is not adjoining the boundary of sin.

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the Taufeeq of practising on Deen correctly, of keeping occupied in good deeds, and seeking Allah Ta’ala’s Pleasure at all times.

‘A Muslim is a very busy person ... busy in earning the Pleasure of Allah Ta’ala.’

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

25. *Attractions and Distractions*

IN AN ACCIDENT, OR DUE TO A SLIP OR FALL, if the joint of the shoulder or leg is dislocated, traction is normally the means adopted in the healing process.

The sinful, immoral attractions and distractions which form the entertainment of those who have forgotten Allah Ta'ala are such, that they dislocate the joints of Imaan. The '*traction*' for restoring, strengthening and improving one's spiritual well-being is sincere Taubah, distancing oneself from sins and from the venues of sins; attending good, Deeni programmes and associating with the pious.

...There are so many, so many, who have gone towards some Haraam (forbidden) attraction, *never* to return therefrom. So many have lost their identity as Muslims, and sometimes they have even lost their Imaan and suffer the great loss of their Aakhirah.

So many have died whilst they were engaged in Haraam entertainment and actions; whether at concerts, casinos, discos, prostitute quarters, in adultery, drugs or some other vice. Sometimes, there is an earthquake, or a tsunami, or a fire, or some other disaster and death comes upon hundreds, if not thousands – many of whom are also engaged in sins. ...What guarantee do we have, while indulging in sins, that we won't be singled out, for our return to Allah Ta'ala? **...Which Muslim wants to return to Allah Ta'ala in a state of sin?**

The holiday period – even week-ends – are a time of great test and trial. There is encouragement and enticement towards all kinds of Haraam. Beach partying, intermingling and courting, immodest dress, loud music and dance, smoking, drinking and drug-taking become the programme and timetable for many Muslims. ...Salaah becomes a forgotten duty and the Islamic dress and identity are discarded.

Very sadly, today, Muslims invite to sins; to the disobedience of Allah Ta'ala. This kind of invite is nothing less than an invitation to Jahannum.

...This was not what we were created for. Allah Ta'ala says:

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ۝

“DID YOU THINK THAT WE CREATED YOU FOR NOTHING, AND THAT YOU WILL NOT BE BROUGHT BACK TO US?”

[SURAH AL-MU'MINOON 23 : 115]

The Muslim youth are supposed to be tomorrow's leaders for the Ummah. They are to be the representatives of Deen, inviting the non-Muslims to Islam, with the modesty and purity of thought, speech, dress and actions, which should be characteristic of every Muslim.

Deen and Shari'ah do not stifle us, do not deprive us of pleasure and enjoyment, do not deny us happiness and celebration. Deen and Shari'ah also accommodate leisure and pleasure. **Islam is beautiful. Most beautiful.** Islam is not 'dry'. It is enjoyable. ...Allah Ta'ala has only placed certain boundaries through His Divine prohibitions, for our own benefit, safety and well-being.

So let us make the effort and avoid sins. Let us not walk the route towards sins. Let us keep clear of the venues of sins like how we would if we had fore-knowledge that there will be an earthquake, tsunami or bomb-blast devastating such places. ...We fear for our lives. The greater need is to fear for our Imaan.

Let us not forget that we are Muslims.

Let us not forget our relationship with Allah Ta'ala.

Let us not forget that death can visit unexpectedly.

Let us not forget that there is accountability.

Let us not forget Jannah.

Let us not forget Jahannum.

This world is a prison for the Believer and a paradise for the disbeliever. ...What is 'good' for the disbelievers will not be good for the Believers. If they find enjoyment in Haraam, the Muslim will find HARM in that same Haraam.

Every person is given the choice. A person either makes a wise decision or an unwise decision. If we adopt Taqwa, we restrain and abstain from disobedience to Allah Ta'ala, then when we leave this world, we leave behind a prison. When we leave this world, we leave free. When the disbeliever leaves this world, he leaves behind his paradise. When he leaves this world, he enters a prison; where there is no release, no bail, no parole and no escape.

This worldly life is short. Very short. Understand the reality: **Every passing second is delivering us closer and closer to the bridge of death. And there is no choice. We have to cross that bridge.**

Time is running out. The journey is long. The life after this is eternal. There is no return to this world.

What preparations have we made? What provisions have we acquired?

Nabi ﷺ said: **“The intelligent one is he who suppresses his desires and practises for what is after death, and the foolish one is he who makes his nafs follow its desires and (he) places (baseless) hope on Allah.”**⁵³

Imam Shafi’ee رحمه الله summed up this life very simply and aptly:

“This worldly life is a just a moment; let it be a moment of obedience.”

‘When giving a talk in Bolton (UK), I mentioned that the name of their suburb tendered noble advice:

That we should place a bolt on the doors of our hearts – to shut nafs and shaytaan out of our hearts, and to protect the treasure of Imaan and the Love of Allah Ta’ala which is in our hearts.’

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

⁵³ Tirmidhi

26. *Immediate Wilayat*⁵⁴

ALLAH TA'ALA MAKES BELOVED the person who turns to Him in sincere repentance. Allah Ta'ala says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ

“... VERILY ALLAH LOVES THOSE WHO REPENT...”

[SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2 : 222]

A young person, after listening to a talk, experienced a revolution in his heart. He asked me: *“With my past, with the sins in my life, how is it possible for me to become a Wali⁵⁵?”*

I said: *“It is extremely simple. It takes just one minute to become a Wali. Raise your hands and with deep regret and remorse in your heart, shed a few tears and pray to Allah Ta’ala: ‘O Allah, I have wasted my life, but I want to become Your Wali; I want to become Your friend. So forgive all the sins which I have committed since maturity, and grant me the Taufeeq to do that which pleases You in my future life.’...You have immediately become a Wali. Now make an effort towards fulfilling those rights which have been violated. The effort made indicates to the sincerity of your Taubah.”*

If Salaah and fasts were missed then the Qaza⁵⁶ must necessarily be made. If Zakaah, Qurbaani and Sadaqatul Fitr were not fulfilled,

⁵⁴ Wilayat: Friendship with Allah Ta’ala

⁵⁵ Wali: Friend of Allah Ta’ala

⁵⁶ Qaza: Religious duty performed after the expiry of its time.

then such monies must necessarily be paid. The same applies to monies that are owing to people. Pay back to whomsoever, what is due, or ask them to forgive. If not, then that Taubah will not be complete. And if harm and injury was caused to another, his forgiveness should be sought.

If there are a number of outstanding Salaah or fasts due, it is obvious that a person cannot read all the Qazas in one day, or keep all his missed fasts at once. This will take due time. **However, the intention of the person, to fulfil all dues of Allah Ta’ala and creation, and the effort made to do so, makes the person a friend and beloved of Allah Ta’ala.**

If the person does not make any effort in that direction after Taubah, this is a clear sign that he was not sincere in his Taubah. Also, in respect to his future life, every effort should be made not to return to sins.

Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had beautifully said:

*“He who repents to Allah Ta’ala,
Becomes the Beloved of Allah
Reaching Him, cleansed and forgiven.”*

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the Taufeeq of sincere Taubah and grant us complete forgiveness.

PART TWO

Standard Prescriptions

Guidelines to overcome
common weaknesses

*“If you want peace, if you want contentment,
If you want tranquility and if you want success,
then chalk out this goal in life:
Make One Allah happy.
...What a beautiful religion Islam is!”*

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

1. *Establishing Fajr Salaah*

IN SUMMER, WHEN FAJR⁵⁷ IS VERY EARLY, many complain about their inability to get up for Fajr Salaah. ...In winter, when Fajr is relatively late, many complain about their inability to get up due to the cold... However, as the cliché goes: ***‘Where there’s a will, there’s a way.’***

If one is sincere in wanting to perform the Fajr Salaah (or any Salaah), then come any season, any type of weather, any condition or any circumstance, the person will do all that is within his capacity, to fulfil the rights of Allah Ta’ala.

Since this weakness of missing Fajr Salaah is so common, the following are prescriptions to remedy the problem:

- An alarm clock should be kept a distance away from the bed. Instead of just switching it off and going back to sleep, you will have to get out of bed to switch it off.
- If you are a deep sleeper, use two clocks, with loud alarms. Place one on either side of you – and at a distance.
- If your hearing is good in one ear and weak in the other, place the clock on that side, where you will hear the alarm loud and clear.

⁵⁷ Fajr: Prayer performed after true dawn and before sunrise.

- Sincerely make Du'aa before sleeping: *'O Allah, I want to get up for Fajr Salaah. Please grant me the Taufeeq⁵⁸ to do so.'*
- Tell those at home to get you up, even if it means shaking you up.
- Request a friend to give you a few rings in the morning – twenty or thirty minutes before Fajr. It will not cost him any money since you know that he is ringing you for Fajr Salaah, and you won't answer the phone.
- Do not stay awake till two o' clock in the morning – in entertainment or pastimes: watching television, surfing the Internet, reading novels, etc. or in any activity, even Mubaah (permissible), which would make it difficult to get up for Fajr. In such cases, go to bed early and begin the day early.
- Shaytaan makes a person feel lazy at Fajr. On awakening, practice upon the Sunnah of immediately rubbing the face and the eyes with both palms in order to remove the effects of sleep. Read the Masnoon⁵⁹ Dua:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

**'ALL PRAISE IN DUE TO ALLAH WHO HAS GIVEN US LIFE AFTER DEATH
(I.E. SLEEP) AND TO HIM WILL WE BE RAISED AND RETURNED.'**

⁵⁸ Taufeeq: Divine assistance

⁵⁹ Masnoon: Sunnah – that which is a practice of Rasulullah ﷺ .

Then read⁶⁰:

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

‘THERE IS NO POWER AND MIGHT EXCEPT WITH ALLAH.’⁶¹

and Ta’awwuz:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

‘I SEEK PROTECTION IN ALLAH FROM SHAYTAAN, THE ACCURSED.’

Even though these are suggested prescriptions, the condition of a Mu’min (Believer in Allah Ta’ala) is that he or she is also ‘Aashiq’ (a sincere lover) of Allah Ta’ala. ...Since when is an Aashiq, negligent in pleasing his or her Beloved? Since when is an Aashiq uninterested in communicating with his or her Beloved?

If those who say that they cannot get up for Fajr Salaah have to read an advertisement in a newspaper, by a gold coin company, that all customers who arrive between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. at their premises will receive a Kruger Rand free, will they sleep or will they camp there the night? ...Whereas a gold coin has no worth in comparison to the value of Salaah! Hazrat ‘Ayesha رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا reported that Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said regarding the two Sunnah of Fajr: **“They are more beloved to me than the entire world”**⁶²

⁶⁰ It should be noted that the reading of these two is not Masnoon per se but helps generally in warding off shaytaani effects.

⁶¹ Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ explained further: ‘There is no strength to refrain from sins but with the protection of Allah and there is no power over good deeds but with the help of Allah.’

⁶² Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 725

Rasulullah ﷺ also said: **“The most burdensome prayers for the hypocrites are ‘Isha and Fajr, but if they only knew what they contain, they would come even if they had to crawl.”**⁶³ ...Those who are neglectful and slack in their performance of Fajr should take heed of this warning of Rasulullah ﷺ .

If the Fardh Salaah are missed because of laziness or because of sport or because of making money or because of sin, then there will be great losses to endure!

If a concerted and sincere effort was made to get up for the Fajr Salaah, after having adopted all means, and the person was unable to make it for Fajr with Jamaat⁶⁴, or missed Fajr, then Insha-Allah, he will not be questioned on the Day of Qiyamah (Resurrection). However, the Qadha of a missed Salaah should be performed as soon as possible.

The person who performs Fajr comes under the protection of Allah Ta’ala. Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“Whoever prays the dawn prayer (Fajr), then He is under Allah’s protection. So beware, O son of Aadam, that Allah does not call you to account for being absent from His protection for any reason.”**⁶⁵

In another Hadīth, Rasulullah ﷺ informed us: “Malaa’ikah (Angels) take turns around you, some at night and some by day, and all of them get together at the time of the Fajr and Asr Salaah.

⁶³ Sahih Bukhari

⁶⁴ Jamaat: Congregation (Salaah in Jamaat is obligatory upon males).

⁶⁵ Ibn Majah

Then those who have passed the night with you (or stayed with you) ascend to Allah, Who asks them, and He knows everything about you better than they: *'In what condition did you leave my servants?'* The Angels reply: ***'We came to them while they were praying, and we left while they were praying.'***⁶⁶

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq of establishing the beautiful and noble command of Salaah in our lives.

"So many of us talk of 'The Rise of Islam', 'The Rise of Islam', but do not make an effort to rise before sunrise to perform the Fajr Salaah – which is a Fardh (obligatory) injunction."

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi 'alayh)

⁶⁶ Sahih Bukhari

2. Giving up Haraam Fantasizing

THERE ARE MANY COMPLAINTS AND EVEN EXCUSES when it comes to the effort to give up sins and the struggle that ensues between a person, his nafs and shaytaan. This battle is on-going – till our dying day. There is no way out, except to show the courage and bravery that every Muslim does have – to please Allah Ta’ala.

Sadly, another widespread weakness is that of Haraam fantasizing. Young and old, married and unmarried, thousands upon thousands succumb to their runaway imaginations when it comes to fantasy world, and this, in turn, leads to even graver sins.

Allah Ta’ala granted us the power of imagination for a beautiful purpose; but most people today utilize the imagination for entertaining filthy thoughts.

The following is a prescription, which I have given to those who had complained of the weakness of Haraam fantasizing. Alhamdulillah, it has been a means of cure for many. May Allah Ta’ala make it a means of cure for all who have this ailment.

Haraam fantasizing is a spiritual sickness. It is an abuse of the great, wonderful and amazing gift of imagination.

Why did Allah Ta’ala give us this gift of imagination?

...The imagination has been given to us so that it may be used to ponder over the Qur’aan Shareef, which entails stories of past nations, verses upon verses about Jannah and the beautiful

bounties of Jannah, Jahannum and its punishments, the Day of Judgement, accountability for our actions and so much else. The imagination was to be used for the purpose of taking lesson and strengthening our Imaan. It was to be used as a catalyst for undertaking good deeds. The imagination was certainly not given to us so that we may indulge our nafs in evil, dirty thoughts. Allah Ta'ala forbid.

One of the main reasons why both men and women have this problem plaguing them is due to the habit of casting lustful gazes.

Lustful gazes, socializing with ghair-mahareem⁶⁷, watching porn movies, paging through porn magazines, or reading romance novels increases desire. To satisfy these shahawaat (base desires), which then overcome the person, the person resorts to fantasizing. ...But fantasizing is not going to satisfy desire. It will only increase desire. The person's sickness will increase. His physical health will inevitably also suffer.

PRESCRIPTION ONE

Guarding the Gaze

Allah Ta'ala has presented such a prescription which effectively reins in base desires and restrains one from sins. This prescription is that we protect our gazes; that we lower our gazes from Haraam. If there is no control of the gaze, then the person will easily become ensnared in Haraam fantasizing, illicit relationships, Zina, etc.

⁶⁷ Ghair Mahram: A person whom one can marry at some stage. For example: A sister-in law is a ghair-mahram and can be married after the brother's death or after divorce.

Allah Ta'ala addresses both the believing men and believing women:

قُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ۝

“TELL THE BELIEVING MEN TO LOWER THEIR GAZE (FROM LOOKING AT THAT WHICH IS HARAAM) AND TO BE MODEST (I.E. TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM PROHIBITED DEEDS LIKE ADULTERY AND FORNICATION, ETC.). THAT IS PURER FOR THEM. VERILY ALLAH IS AWARE OF WHAT THEY DO.”

وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ
مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ ۝

“AND TELL THE BELIEVING WOMEN TO LOWER THEIR GAZE (FROM LOOKING AT THAT WHICH IS FORBIDDEN) AND TO BE MODEST (I.E. TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM PROHIBITED DEEDS LIKE ADULTERY, FORNICATION, ETC.) AND NOT TO SHOW OFF THEIR BEAUTY EXCEPT ONLY THAT WHICH IS APPARENT AND LET THEM WEAR THEIR HEAD-COVERINGS OVER THEIR BOSOMS...”

[SURAH AN-NOOR 24 : 30/ 31]

Lowering one's gaze from Haraam is a sure remedy for curtailing evil desires and lust. Guarding one's gaze also greatly assists in purifying the heart, mind and soul. Together with this, avoid fraternizing with the opposite gender, avoid unnecessary talk with ghair-mahareem, avoid looking at indecent pictures, avoid lewd and immoral reading material, keep far away from any interaction with ghair-mahareem via social media, etc.

PRESCRIPTION TWO

Zikrullah⁶⁸

Occupy the heart and the mind with the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala.

Our respected Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would prescribe that when making the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala, to use the imagination and imagine the heart becoming cleaned and purified of everything except Allah Ta'ala; or imagine, that together with the tongue, the heart is also uttering the words of Allah Ta'ala's Zikr; or imagine that the name of Allah Ta'ala is coming forth from every hair of the body and that the earth, sky, stones, sea, land, birds, animals and every atom of creation are all engaged in the beautiful Zikr of Allah Ta'ala.

PRESCRIPTION THREE

Change the direction of thoughts

When the desire to engage in Haraam fantasizing comes into the heart, take the imagination to the Day of Judgment; stand in the Court of Allah Ta'ala and begin accounting for all your actions in this world. Think of how you will have to account for and what you will say to Allah Ta'ala when all these dirty thoughts will be presented to you – that is, if you continue in this sin and do not make sincere Taubah.

Allah Ta'ala says in the Qur`aan Shareef:

وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ تُشِيرَتْ ۝

⁶⁸ It is best to undertake Zikr with the guidance of a Shaykh.

“WHEN THE SCROLLS [OF DEEDS] ARE LAID OPEN.”

[SURAH AT-TAKWEER 81 :10]

هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطُحُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ۖ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝

“THIS, OUR RECORD, SPEAKS ABOUT YOU WITH TRUTH : FOR WE WERE WONT TO PUT ON RECORD ALL THAT YOU DID.”

[SURAH AL-JATHIYA 45 :29]

Even though Allah Ta’ala is All-Knowing and well aware of all that we do, He has established a system whereby every action and every detail of every action is recorded, which will be presented to us on the Day of Reckoning – in favour of us or witness *against* us.

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يُوَيْلَنَا مَا هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا ۚ وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا ۖ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ۝

“AND THE BOOK (OF DEEDS) WILL BE PLACED (BEFORE YOU); AND YOU WILL SEE THE SINFUL IN GREAT TERROR BECAUSE OF WHAT IS (RECORDED) THEREIN; THEY WILL SAY: ‘AH! WOE TO US! WHAT A BOOK IS THIS! IT LEAVES OUT NOTHING. SMALL OR GREAT, BUT TAKES ACCOUNT THEREOF!’ THEY WILL FIND ALL THAT THEY DID PLACED BEFORE THEM; AND NOT ONE WILL YOUR LORD TREAT WITH INJUSTICE.”

[SURAH AL-KAHF 18 : 49]

Otherwise take your imagination for Hajj: Picture yourself at the Multazam, making Tawaaf, making Sa’ee; picture yourself at the Raudha Mubarak, conveying Salaam to Rasulullah ﷺ, or

take your imagination to your Qabr⁶⁹ and the events which will unfold in the grave after death. ...Insha-Allah, this will be a means of defeating nafs and shaytaan, as well as obliterating a very bad, filthy habit.

PRESCRIPTION FOUR

Keep Occupied

If you still find yourself weak against the demands of nafs and the whisperings of shaytaan, immediately occupy yourself in some good deed or in that which is Mubaah (permissible). Listen to some Qira'ah or Deeni talk, or begin a conversation with your parents, or with your brothers and sisters, or phone a good, pious friend. ...Occupy yourself in that which is Halaal and Mubaah; otherwise nafs and shaytaan will ravage your heart, destroy your peace of mind and lead you to even suicidal tendencies.

Consider filthy thoughts as pigs. Just as we show aversion and absolute disgust on seeing a pig, so should we be disgusted with dirty thoughts – which are also Haraam (forbidden).

PRESCRIPTION FOUR

Harms

Haraam fantasizing leads to the evil habit of self-gratification (masturbation), because the person does not find a Halaal avenue to immediately satisfy his desires. Very sadly, this has become a disastrous weakness amongst the youth. One should ponder over

⁶⁹ Qabr: literally means 'Grave' [Also the period of life after death until the Resurrection].

the various harms, which are so many, and these harms are spiritual, physical and psychological.

Satisfying one's desires by masturbating is not permissible even if a person does not have the means to marry. Allah Ta'ala mentions in the Qur'aan Shareef that those who do not find the means to marry should remain chaste.

وَلْيَسْتَغْفِرِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُعْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ط

“AND THOSE WHO DO NOT FIND THE MEANS TO MARRY, SHOULD REMAIN CHASTE UNTIL ALLAH GIVES THEM RESOURCES BY HIS GRACE.”

[SURAH AN-NOOR 24 : 33]

Remaining chaste is a Divine command which is compulsory to comply with – therefore we will find the Ahadīth presenting prescriptions to remain chaste – for example, lowering the gaze, fasting, etc.

As a prescription, the following harms⁷⁰ should be read and re-read if need be, until it is understood that the harms, long term, are not worth the temporary gratification that comes with the sin.

SPIRITUAL HARMS :

- 1.) The Taufeeq of doing good deeds is taken away. The person is deprived of Tahajjud, Tilawah of the Qur'aan Shareef, associating with the pious, etc.

⁷⁰ These spiritual, physical and psychological harms have been taken and amended from the book: *“Masturbation – A Disastrous Problem faced by the Youth”*, published by Madrasah Arabia Islamia, Azaadville.

- 2.) The person deprives the Rooh (soul) of spiritual knowledge and finds an aversion to people.
- 3.) The most dangerous harm is that the person will not be able to remain steadfast on Deen. (May Allah Ta'ala protect).
- 4.) A person who satisfies his evil desires in this manner is cursed according to Rasulullah ﷺ. Sincere Taubah and Istighfaar should be resorted to. In most cases, while the sin is forgiven, the physical harm is long lasting.

The following physical harms have been recorded by highly qualified Hakeems, the equivalent of specialist doctors. Some harms listed are for men and others, for females.

PHYSICAL HARMS :

- 1.) The bladder becomes weak and this leads to problems in respect to Taharah – Wudhu / Salaah and other Ibaadah. There are many who are suffering with involuntary urinary and seminal discharges due to the indulgence in this sin, and they write mentioning the difficulties that are thereafter encountered.
- 2.) It weakens the nerves.
- 3.) It causes some limbs like the legs to shake and quiver.
- 4.) It causes pain in the vertebra column, the spinal column from which semen is ejaculated. This pain creates crookedness and twisting in the back.

- 5.) It creates weakness in the brain and weakness of memory.
- 6.) It weakens the sight and reduces the normal limit of vision.
- 7.) It causes a person to become old before time.
- 8.) It decreases the natural resistance of the body.
- 9.) It causes harm to the four principle organs in the body: the heart, brain, liver and stomach.
- 10.) It leads to impotency.
- 11.) Excessive loss of semen is in reality excessive loss of blood. In later years, a person may not have the ability to father any children.
- 12.) It causes an excessive loss of sperm by way of nocturnal emission (wet dreams).

PSYCHOLOGICAL HARMS:

It leads to:

- 1.) Agitation and irritation over trivial matters,
- 2.) Lack of confidence,
- 3.) Disinterest in studying and
- 4.) Desire for isolation.

Much more can be stated in respect to the harms of this sin. So contemplating the above should give every incentive to give up the sin. No one would like to contend with any one of the above

problems and yet just one evil deed and the person has invited waves of calamities upon himself or herself.

If evil desires still get the better, one should fast lengthy periods of time (weeks on end, reduce the intake of meat, etc.); otherwise Nikah is a simple solution. Where evil desires are so difficult to suppress that the person engages in Haraam, it becomes Fardh (compulsory) for the person to marry. This is, of course, for those who have the ability.

Rasulullah ﷺ advised the youth: *“O youth! Whoever from amongst you has the means, should marry, because it is more effective in the safeguarding of the gaze and more chaste for the private parts. If one does not have the ability to do this, then he should fast because it is a shield for him (from sins).”*⁷¹

May Allah Ta’ala grant us the understanding and the Taufeeq to stay away from all sins.

‘There is no place in the heavens and no place on earth that can offer a veil from The One Who is All-Seeing – Allah Ta’ala.’

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh)

⁷¹ Sahih Bukhari / Sahih Muslim

3. Remedy for Illicit Relationships

THERE ARE MANY YOUNG BOYS AND GIRLS, as well as adults – both married and unmarried – who have some baggage of illicit relationships. They find it to be a great challenge and difficulty in trying to break away from the illicit relationships they were involved in previously.

They now realize that it is sinful and shameless. It is Haraam. It is obscene in the sight of Allah Ta'ala. It also did not bring any real pleasure or happiness; rather it created anxiety and worry. It made life dark and restless.

Whilst they make sincere Taubah and they desire to get out of the Haraam relationships, nafs and shaytaan are enemies who leave no stone unturned in drawing a person back to the filthy ways of the past. The two work in cahoots and try every tactic to make a person think of the past and get back to the same rot.

These people had genuinely and sincerely given up those relationships but the pressure of nafs and shaytaan is so strong that they eventually succumb to the temptation, once again respond to the whisperings of shaytaan and give into the demands of the nafs. What it brings them in return is nothing but more anxiety, more worries and more problems.

Alhamdulillah, our Mashaa'ikh have given us extremely beneficial prescriptions whereby we may come out of sins for good.

If a person is sincere, he repents, he regrets whatever happened in the past and does not want to return to it, but somehow after some time, once again, he becomes overpowered by nafs and shaytaan, then the following advices offer excellent remedies.

PRESCRIPTION ONE

‘Breaking up’

In the language of illicit love, when there is disinterest and disinclination in a relationship or there is a disagreement or quarrel, and things become ‘sour’, ‘bitter’, ‘bad’ or ‘hostile’, then the two who are involved, ‘break up’ or ‘split up’. Sometimes the one party ‘ditches’ or ‘dumps’ the other.

Merely from the type of words used in the language of illicit affairs, we can see that the end of anything Haraam is evil, harsh and hurtful. To break, split, ditch, dump, etc., are very unpleasant experiences and are often very nasty as well.

Nevertheless, now that one knows that the illicit relationship is Haraam, one must end the relationship – for the pleasure of Allah Ta’ala.

The person should be told in no uncertain terms: *“I have made sincere Taubah from whatever occurred in the past. I do not want to contend with punishment in this world and in the Aakhirah – in the Qabr and in Jahannum. This relationship has made my life restless and full of worries and darkness. I have given up this relationship and will not go back. Allah Ta’ala’s Pleasure comes first!”*

If that was already conveyed but did not have any effect on the person, it is even encouraged that the person should create hatred for himself or herself in the heart of the person for whom there is some Haraam attachment.

Take the following example: Due to ignorance, or the promptings of nafs and shaytaan, or as a result of the environment in school or college or work, or due to not realising that it is bad and evil, the person had an illicit, Haraam and forbidden relationship in the past. After realising this and giving it up and after sincere Taubah, that illicit beloved is still in the mind. It may be that the other person is trying to encourage the continuation of the relationship. So, you have to *create* a problem.

Quarrel and argue for the purpose of breaking up that relationship. If need be, even make up a story like: "I have a proposal which I have accepted. I have got nothing to do with you anymore." or: "If you are going to call or contact me or send any message or e-mail to me, I will hand it over to some senior members of my family who will take very serious and severe action."

Many a time, the other person pursues the Haraam relationship even after the person ends it; so make the person believe that you hate him or her.

If the person is sincere in breaking off the relationship, she will adopt these strategies to get out of Haraam. The fears that arise, such as: *He was the person for me. He would have been my marriage partner. I will be heartbroken. No one will marry me, etc.,* are whisperings of shaytaan. ...These are shaytaani webs and shaytaani traps.

...Alhamdulillah, many broke off their illicit relationships. Even though they had feelings for each other, they were sincere; they made up their minds that they would have nothing to do with each other, because they were not married and it was a sinful relationship. If they were meant for each other, then even after ending that relationship and not communicating for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, Allah Ta'ala created the means for them to marry and they are now living happily.

Make Dua to Allah Ta'ala that if the person is suitable as a marriage partner that Allah Ta'ala should send him; otherwise whoever else is the best should come along. If he is not suitable, then Allah Ta'ala must turn him away from you and turn you away from him and protect you from the traps of shaytaan and nafs. ...This is the route to go.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: **“You will never leave something for the sake of Allah, but Allah will give you something better in return.”**⁷²

...The thoughts cannot be erased altogether. The thoughts will come, but as I mention repeatedly, read: **أَمِنْتُ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ**⁷³ a few times and immediately occupy your mind in something else – anything that is permissible ... anything that is Halaal ... anything that Shari'ah declares as acceptable.

Do not entertain those Haraam thoughts, because the longer you entertain them, the more difficult it will be to get out of the trap. There is no other solution to this problem except courage and

⁷² Musnad Al Imam Ahmad

⁷³ I believe in Allah and His Messengers.

strength. We have a lot of courage and a lot of strength for other things. So utilise the same courage and seek Allah Ta'ala's Pleasure.

This is one prescription: To create a quarrel, argument and to use some harsh language or to even go to the extent of speaking a lie to end that relationship.

PRESCRIPTION TWO

Harms and Consequences

Secondly, we have seen so many people – young, fit, healthy, handsome, beautiful – with everything going for them ... and suddenly death came upon them. They were courting ... and suddenly they were shot dead. They were murdered by hijackers ... or they were in an accident and were killed. Now they are gone from this world.

Recently, a young girl and boy were courting. They were parked in some secluded place. Both were shot dead.... We just don't know when, where and how death will come? How can we take the risk? ...So many have left the world completely unprepared.

Do not play with Allah Ta'ala's Power and Might. After knowing that something is Haraam, that it is sinful, to still continue going in that direction and continue displeasing Allah Ta'ala is very dangerous. Allah Ta'ala gives a person rope, but when the noose tightens around the neck, it may be too late. The person can scream, shout, search for solutions and run around for Taweez⁷⁴, but nothing will

⁷⁴ Taweez: amulet

help. Many are sick and ill because those same boyfriends or those same girlfriends did Sihr and black magic on them. I am not sitting here relating any fairy tales.

Two young non-Muslim girls came to see me at the Madrasah. The one said to me: *"We heard that you give Taweez. I want you to do something to make so-and-so, whom I am in love with, marry me."*

In other words, she was looking for someone to do some Sihr (witchcraft), some magic and Jadoo (black magic), to twist that person's mind so that he marries her.

She further explained: *"He is very much interested in me but because of our religious differences – he is a Muslim and I am a Hindu – his family will not accept me. So I want you to do something. I will pay whatever it costs."*

Obviously I completely refused in a diplomatic and polite way. However this is proof, this is clear evidence that these girls are going around to get people to do Sihr and Jadoo. Whilst I did not give them anything, that does not mean that they did not go anywhere else.

Illicit relationships lead to these kinds of problems. So if you do not want to suffer a nervous breakdown and endless problems in your future life, it is in your interest and everyone's interest to stay clear of all Haraam.

One young Muslim boy – a university student – met me at the Masjid. He was in a state of fear and great anxiety and requested that I please make Dua for him as he was in serious problems – in

‘hot waters’. He said that he was involved with a non-Muslim girl. She fell pregnant and her brothers were looking for him because they wanted to kill him. ...This is the end result.

Think of the Azaab of Allah Ta’ala, and know that it comes in different forms. Think of the consequence of these relationships. What happiness does it really bring? Look at the restlessness and the worries that the person suffers.

There can be no happiness except in the obedience of Allah Ta’ala and in fulfilling the Ahkaam (commands) of Allah Ta’ala. If there is marriage – a Halaal, pure relationship – Allah Ta’ala will create love and happiness in the marriage and grant Barakah (blessings) – that is, if both spouses live their lives in conformity with the Sunnah and Islamic teachings.

If there is no marriage, Haraam will lead to more pain, more suffering and more anxieties. Sometimes it even leads to taking an overdose of sleeping pills, or committing suicide or murder. ...Suicide is no escape from any problem. There is severe punishment which will be meted out to those who take their lives.

There was an incident that occurred not long ago, where a Muslim boy could not deal with the fact that his girlfriend split up with him. So he killed her in cold blood, turned the gun on himself and killed himself. What did they both gain in their illicit relationship? ...Nothing but disaster!

Nothing good is gained. It is a very temporary, fleeting kind of enjoyment that the person seems to be getting, but it will end very quickly.

So the second prescription is to immediately think: *What will be my condition if I have to suddenly suffer paralysis, or I am suddenly seized by the Angel of Death, or if my sins become exposed? What will be my condition if Allah Ta'ala reveals all these secrets?*

...One of our respected Akaabir had mentioned the following as a very apt analogy: When cats relieve themselves, they cover their faeces with some sand to conceal the filth. However, one rainfall and the rain washes away the sand, and the filth is exposed. Similarly, a person commits sins and covers up his tracks – thinking no will find out. He continues in this manner, persisting in sins – confident that everything is well hidden. However, when Allah Ta'ala sends down His punishment, then just as the rain exposes the faeces of the cat, similarly all those hidden sins become exposed. May Allah Ta'ala protect us all.

The need is to make Taubah – sincerely repent – without any delay. Think: *What kind of shame, suffering and embarrassment I will have to undergo if my parents come to know, or my brothers and sisters and my other family members come to know? How am I going to face the people?*

Keep thinking of the consequences.

Nafs and shaytaan do not want us to think further than the Haraam enjoyment and pleasure we get in indulging in our whims and fancies and in fulfilling their demands. Whilst they do not want us to think any further, if only we would genuinely reflect over the severe consequences, we will most certainly and most definitely make a concerted and determined effort to restrain ourselves from sins.

PREScription THREE

Visualize the repulsive

Thirdly, if these shaytaani thoughts persist, imagine that illicit beloved in the 80th year of his or her life, with the back bent over, with no teeth, with white hair and ready for the grave. ...One day this will be the very condition of that face and body over which one has become Aashiq. Death will come and it will turn to dust.

Our Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had mentioned this reality so aptly, to create aversion in the heart for any illicit beloved:

***“Why attach the heart to that... which will become...
a decaying ...a decaying, rotting corpse?”***

Some people are overcome by the pressure of nafs and shaytaan and just cannot seem to get out of the illicit relationship. Every time the illicit beloved's face comes to mind, they see a handsome or beautiful face. This, in turn, leads to evil thoughts and Haraam fantasizing.

With regard to such people, Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: *“At that time, think of somebody who, in your opinion, is really, really ugly and repulsive; with mucus coming out of the nose, with phlegm dribbling out of the mouth, with pus flowing out from sores on the body, and so forth.”*

...Thinking in this manner is a method of putting your mind off thinking about the person.

PRESCRIPTION FOUR

Muraqabah-e-Maut

Another very beneficial prescription is Muraqabah of Maut. Meditate over death every night.

Think of all those people who lived in this world and lived a life that suited their whims and fancies. Where are they all now? What has become of them? What will be their condition in the Aakhirah? ...If we follow suit, and also live a life in submission to nafs and shaytaan, and live in the disobedience of Allah Ta'ala, what will happen to us?

Whenever the desire comes to indulge in any Haraam and you are alone in your room and can engage in sin, then at that time close your eyes for a few seconds and picture yourself on your deathbed. Think: One day... very soon... my eyes will close and the circus will be over; the performance will be over. ...The world is like a circus, with many clowns who make their appearances and perform different acts. When they finish entertaining, the show comes to an end.

The intelligent person and the wise person lives on the earth believing in Allah Ta'ala and doing that which is pleasing to Allah Ta'ala and restraining himself or herself from that which is displeasing to Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul ﷺ .

Nabi ﷺ said: **“The intelligent one is he who guards himself (from evil) and practises for what is after death, and the**

foolish one is he who follows the desires of his nafs and yet has (baseless) hope on Allah.”⁷⁵

So when these thoughts, to engage in sin, make their appearance, just close your eyes for a few minutes and picture yourself on the bed when your soul is about to depart, to return to Allah Ta’ala.

Imagine... People have surrounded you. Somebody is reciting Surah Yaseen, somebody is reading the Kalima to encourage you to read the same, and others are engaged in Dua. Somebody maybe looking for the doctor, somebody is feeling your pulse, someone is blowing on you or sprinkling water on you but the message has gone around to family, friends, neighbours and others that so-and-so is about to die. He / she is in Sakaraat – in the last moments of life.

You are now seeing the Angels. ...This is why the person just stares whilst in Sakaraat. The person is *seeing* something: Either he or she is seeing the Angels who are coming in a very good form to take the Rooh (soul) – because the person was pious and righteous; or the Angels are coming in a very, very frightening form for those who spent their lives in evil and vice and did not repent.

So there you are – in Sakaraat: You can even hear the comments around as to what kind of a person you were. ...People do not stop talking even at the time of Sakaraat, discussing the person who is dying.

⁷⁵ Tirmidhi

Now, if at this critical time, when you are departing from this worldly abode for good – forever – someone asks you: *“Must I bring your boyfriend / girlfriend? Must I call your Mashooq (beloved)? Would you like to spend your last moments with him/her?”*

What would you say at that time? Will you think of that Haraam beloved? ...Of what help and assistance will he or she be when the angels will be present to take the soul from your body?

Then picture that from every part of the body – from the feet, from the hands and from every other part of the body – the soul is extracted. ...Read in the Kitaabs as to how the souls of the evil ones are extracted. What pain, what suffering! May Allah Ta’ala protect us all. ...And read in what a beautiful, gentle manner the soul is extracted for those who are the pious and good ones.

If we want to persist in evil, picture how the soul is going to be extracted.

Then ... those hands that were very much desirous of embracing the illicit beloved – become lifeless. They cannot do anything now. Those lips which were desirous of kissing the illicit beloved; those eyes that were always desirous of seeing or staring into those pretty or handsome faces; those fingers that were always itching to write love letters, or send smses, messages, etc.; those feet that were always keen to walk towards the illicit beloved – what will be the condition of everything? Lifeless. Completely silenced!

The eyes are shut, the ears can hear no more, the hands can touch no more, the feet can walk no more, the lips can kiss no more and

the tongue can speak no more. Those beautiful garments that were worn to attract the attention of the illicit beloved will be cut and sliced with a scissors, if they cannot be removed easily from your body.

You will be in the hands of those giving Ghusl. They will turn you left and right, backwards and forwards – as they desire. Water will be poured over your body. A few sheets will be your garment, with no designer labels on it. Those same people, who at one time were so close to you, will say: *“Don’t leave this body here anymore because it will rot; it will give off a stench. Take the body for burial. Send this body to the graveyard.”*

You will be transported on the shoulders of men to the Masjid or somewhere where the Janaza Salaah will take place. Finally, you will be taken to the grave and left in the wilderness of the earth. Nobody will accompany you. Nobody will accompany any of us. They will throw sand and say goodbye. At that time, the only thing that will light up our graves and make it easy for us to rest until the Day of Qiyamah will be the good deeds we do and the pain that we take on our hearts when restraining ourselves from Haraam.

Without taking this pain on our hearts, of sacrificing our evil desires, we cannot expect to have that Noor in the heart which will then light up the grave.

...No doubt, there are many, many temptations. But become like a lion. I have said many a time, *“Fight like a lion!”*

When tempted towards Haraam, think of the consequences. What will you get at the end of the day? What will you get at the end of your life? What will you get in the Hereafter?

I am not saying that giving up sins is easy for everyone. However, many a difficult thing is undertaken in this world when there is determination. When a person is determined, the person is prepared to climb Mount Everest, even at the risk of his life. The person will climb Mount Everest even though he may rest there forever.

We read of people who are prepared to walk from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj. Even if it takes them a year, they will walk. **When a person is determined, he finds the courage.** Here, the command is not to break or climb some mountain. All you have to do is just suppress the nafs and its evil desire to sin, for a little while, and in doing so, you earn the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and great rewards.

...This is the remedy and solution: **Oppose the evil desires of the nafs; adopt Taqwa.**

PRESCRIPTION FIVE

Washing and Beautifying the Heart

If you are Bay'at with a Shaykh, picture the Shaykh using a hose to hose down the heart of all the filth that has entered it and picture the Shaykh thereafter writing "Allah, Allah" all over your heart.

PRESCRIPTION SIX

Developing the Awareness of Allah Ta'ala

If your Shaykh, Ustaadh, father, grandfather or some other respectable person was present, would you still do the same thing? ...No.

You fear the eyes of all these people but you do not fear the sight of Allah Ta'ala. Yet, Allah Ta'ala is All-Seeing!

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبَالْمُرْصَادِ ۝

“VERILY YOUR LORD IS EVER – WATCHFUL (OVER THEM).”

[SURAH AL-FAJR 89 : 14]

Allah Ta'ala has a 'close up' of each one of us. He is watching our every movement. And He is not in need of any tracking device or technology. ...Allah Ta'ala is with you.

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ط

“AND HE IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU ARE...”

[SURAH AL-HADEED 57 : 4]

PRESCRIPTION SEVEN

Determination

Just the reading of a Wazeefa is not sufficient to give up sins. There must be determination and a firm intention to give up Haraam. There has to be Himmat; there has to be courage. It *will* break the heart; it will shatter the heart; it will sometimes be very difficult but

if the sacrifice is rendered a few times, Allah Ta'ala makes it easy. Allah Ta'ala makes it easy, seeing that His servant is putting an effort into giving up Haraam.

There is great wisdom in whatever Allah Ta'ala and His Nabi ﷺ declared Haraam for us. Allah Ta'ala wants to give us a happy life – a life of peace, a life of contentment and happiness.

...One brother wrote to me and said that he and his wife were always involved in quarrels, fights and arguments. They were always at logger-heads. There was no peace in their home. Their marriage was on the rocks and divorce was the only option.

Allah Ta'ala's Fadhl and Ihsaan, the brother commenced attending the programmes and the wife too, listens to the programmes via the receiver. They took the courage and threw the television out of the home and paid off their instalments, which were heavily loaded with interest. They made since Taubah from the many sins that they were engaged in. The brother went on to say that Alhamdulillah, they have never been happier as they are now. Husband and wife and the children are extremely happy. There is so much of peace and contentment in their home. They now move as a family and live as a family and enjoy the blessings of Allah Ta'ala more than ever.

This is just one letter. Many others – young and old – have written similar letters. This is evidence enough, proof enough that when you become Allah Ta'ala's, then Allah Ta'ala becomes yours! Then Allah Ta'ala will give happiness in the heart.

...All along the person thought that happiness was in watching those immoral soaps and those dirty films and movies, and the other filth,

and engaging in different sins, but then realizes it brought nothing but misery in his or her life. More and more quarrels, more and more arguments, more and more harm and damage was done until they took up the courage and got rid of sins and see what a change it made in their lives. There are so many cases. At your young age, do not give up hope.

Just as you are firm and determined when it comes to wanting something material, that you even demand for it; in the same way become a little strong on the nafs and see what happiness it brings. ...Go on a diet from sins for forty days and see the difference. You try many diets. Try one more diet and this is the diet from sins.

Consider the sweet, charming words spoken by some boys (or vice versa) as whisperings from shaytaan. Shaytaan is very, very shrewd. He pulls you towards sins and thereafter he drops you very hard. Shaytaan glorifies illicit love and takes the person down the path of destruction and humiliation.

For your benefit, for your good, for your future and for your happiness, give up what is Haraam. If you have any baggage from the past, of any illicit relationships, firmly make the decision and end it.

May Allah Ta'ala bless you, bless me, bless everyone with the Taufeeq and Hidayah of Amal on the beautiful teachings of Deen. May Allah Ta'ala clean our hearts of Ghairullah and fill our hearts with His Pure Love.

APPENDAGE

Ambition and the Roles of a Muslim

ADVICE GIVEN TO A YOUNG GIRL

A YOUNG MUSLIM GIRL OF FIFTEEN wrote a letter to me, stating therein, that her heartfelt desire is to become a Hollywood or Bollywood actress. She mentioned in her letter that she believed she has what it takes to become an actress. Moreover, she was pleased to also inform me that she would not miss her Salaah or give up Tilawah of the Qur'aan Shareef when she becomes the glamorous Hollywood actress. She wanted my opinion on her decision, in the light of the fact that she will continue to be a good Muslim.

Together with giving some advice, I also answered a few of her questions and my reply was as follows. Insha-Allah, it will be a means of some goodness for someone, somewhere:

- 1.) *Ambition has its positive side and its negative side. As a Muslim, we need to know and understand both sides ... so that we aspire for the positive and stay clear of the negative.*

The ambition, aspiration, dream, goal and aim of a Muslim is very, very different from that of a non-Muslim. After all, we believe that we were created for an exclusive purpose... Allah Ta'ala created us so that we recognize Him, love Him intensely, and worship Him ... that we do that which pleases Him and we stay away from that which displeases Him.

Moreover, our goal is Jannah. Our destination, Insha-Allah, is Jannah ... but we need to work for this Jannah. To achieve Jannah, we will have to work **within** the parameters of Shari'ah. We will not achieve salvation and Jannah by working **outside** the parameters of Deen and Shari'ah.

On the other hand, the ambition of those who do not believe in Allah Ta'ala and do not believe in the Akhirah and Accountability is solely this world – accumulating as much of it as possible and living a life, fulfilling all the whims and fancies of the nafs (ego). They make this world, the 'be all and end all' of life and choose this temporary world as their Jannah, trading what is eternal for what will perish. ...When the disbelievers reach the Hereafter, there will be only great regret. Their worldly ambitions and desires would have brought them tremendous loss and utter ruin.

...From amongst the excuses presented by this young girl, to support the Hollywood / Bollywood 'dream', were the following:

2.) “Shouldn’t I become an actress and follow my dream?”

The following analogy will, Insha-Allah, be appropriate as advice, in the light of your aspiration to be an actress and play the roles of different characters.

Our visit to this world is for a very, very short span of time and can be likened to a stage show, where actors and actresses assume different roles. ...In real life - from birth till death – each and every one of us has different roles to play. Once we step onto the stage of this worldly life, we have to assume these roles as we pass our days.

Through the Qur'aan Shareef and Sunnah, we learn how to assume these roles and we learn the manner and way of the worship of Allah Ta'ala, and we learn how to fulfil the rights of the Creator and creation.

As our guide, Rasulallah ﷺ showed us how to carry out our different roles; teaching us how to be a good parent, a good spouse, a son, a daughter, a brother, a sister, a trader, a teacher, a ruler, a military leader and so forth.

If we play our roles as we have been directed to, Allah Ta'ala promises great rewards in this world and the next. The person will have the crown of Allah Ta'ala's Friendship and Allah Ta'ala will grant the person respect and honour. After death and on the Day of Judgment, in the next world, the person will be accepted as a 'Jannati', and will enjoy the never-ending home of Jannah, where his every wish and desire will be fulfilled.

If we can just keep the above before us: We have various acts and roles to play in real life. ...We cannot be passing our life in this world, playing actors and actresses in an imaginary world. ...Doing this is forgetting the purpose of our life on earth.

You too have got to learn to play the part of a Muslimah, a daughter, a sister, a wife and a mother; as well as a flag-bearer of Islam ... These are the roles that you will assume – **but in real life**; not in films, etc. There is no time for make-believe and fantasy roles in the great test of this worldly life.

3.) “Isn't it better to do something that you enjoy?”

It would only be better, if it is pleasing to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulallah ﷺ. If it is not pleasing to them, it should not be pleasing to a Muslim. A Muslim will not find success and happiness in the displeasure of Allah Ta'ala. Disobedience is a tried and tested recipe for failure, disgrace and ruin. Just ask those who have whiled away their lives in sins. What did they achieve? ...Misery.

4.) “Should I forget about it?”

It would be best to forget about it. Erase it from heart and mind – for the pleasure of Allah Ta’ala. Allah Ta’ala will greatly reward you if you please Him by sacrificing your desire – a desire which He does not approve of and which displeases Him.

5.) “Is it against Shari’ah?”

Yes, it is very much against Shari’ah.

6.) “I love the glitter and the glamour...”

You are probably familiar with many of the actors, actresses musicians, models and others. ...Do you not see how superficial and shallow their lives are? It is a sham and pretence. ...Drugs, drink, smoking, illicit relationships for no more – committing so much of fornication and adultery, and not finding any true love and true happiness. There is no substance to their lives.

Many end up committing suicide because of their unhappy and miserable lives – despite the money, the name and the fame. Money did not buy them happiness; it did not buy them love... It bought many of them everlasting disgrace and humiliation. May Allah Ta’ala save us all.

This is the reality of their so called ‘glamorous lives’... so we should be careful that we are not deceived.

7.) “And I love to dress up and look beautiful...”

Your love for dressing up and being beautiful is something which is common to most women. However, the beauty of the Muslim woman is so special that Allah Ta’ala does not like that any stranger should cast

lustful, dirty gazes at her, fantasize about her, harass or take advantage of her. Therefore Allah Ta'ala tells her to conceal her beauty by dressing modestly when she leaves her home.

Allah Ta'ala allows for dressing up and looking beautiful also, but this too within certain boundaries and only for certain people, such as your husband. ...Shari'ah is most beautiful and most protecting for us all – but we need to learn and understand it and practise upon it.

8.) “And I will continue reading my five times Salaah and Qur’aan Shareef every day...”

Masha-Allah, it is pleasing to read that you do not want to ignore your religious obligations and that you want to continue with Salaah and Qur’aan Shareef, but this has to be maintained in a life which is also in conformity with what Salaah represents, and the teachings found in the Qur’aan Shareef.

Salaah represents submission to Allah Ta'ala and the Qur’aan Shareef presents various Commandments for us to follow. Hollywood and Bollywood represents defiance and rejection of Allah Ta'ala and the Qur’aan Shareef. There can be no marriage or unification of good and bad, truth and falsehood.

May Allah Ta'ala grant understanding.

...This young girl had various questions to justify and validate pursuing her ambition – clearly indicating that exposure to television, movies, magazines and so forth leaves such impressions on the heart, which diverts a person to everything that stands in opposition to Deen.

Many Muslim girls and boys are modelling, singing and dancing, vying for celebrity positions in the media, flaunting their beauty and charms to secure 'votes' and popularity, and doing so much else, openly and publicly, which is Haraam. ...The heart becomes heavy with grief.

If only we would take heed and work towards protecting ourselves and our children from treading the wrong path. Whilst this young girl asked, hundreds of others pursue such ambition without care and concern. Sometimes even with the full support and backing from parents, family members and friends. **What support is this when it drives towards Jahannum?**

This life is just one chance. We either make it or break it. But understand well: No one is coming back to this world. No one gets a second chance.

May Allah Ta'ala guide us all, keep us on Siratul Mustaqeem and grant us death on Imaan, Najaat in the hereafter, and His eternal Pleasure.

